

BIRD HUNTING THROUGH WILD EUROPE

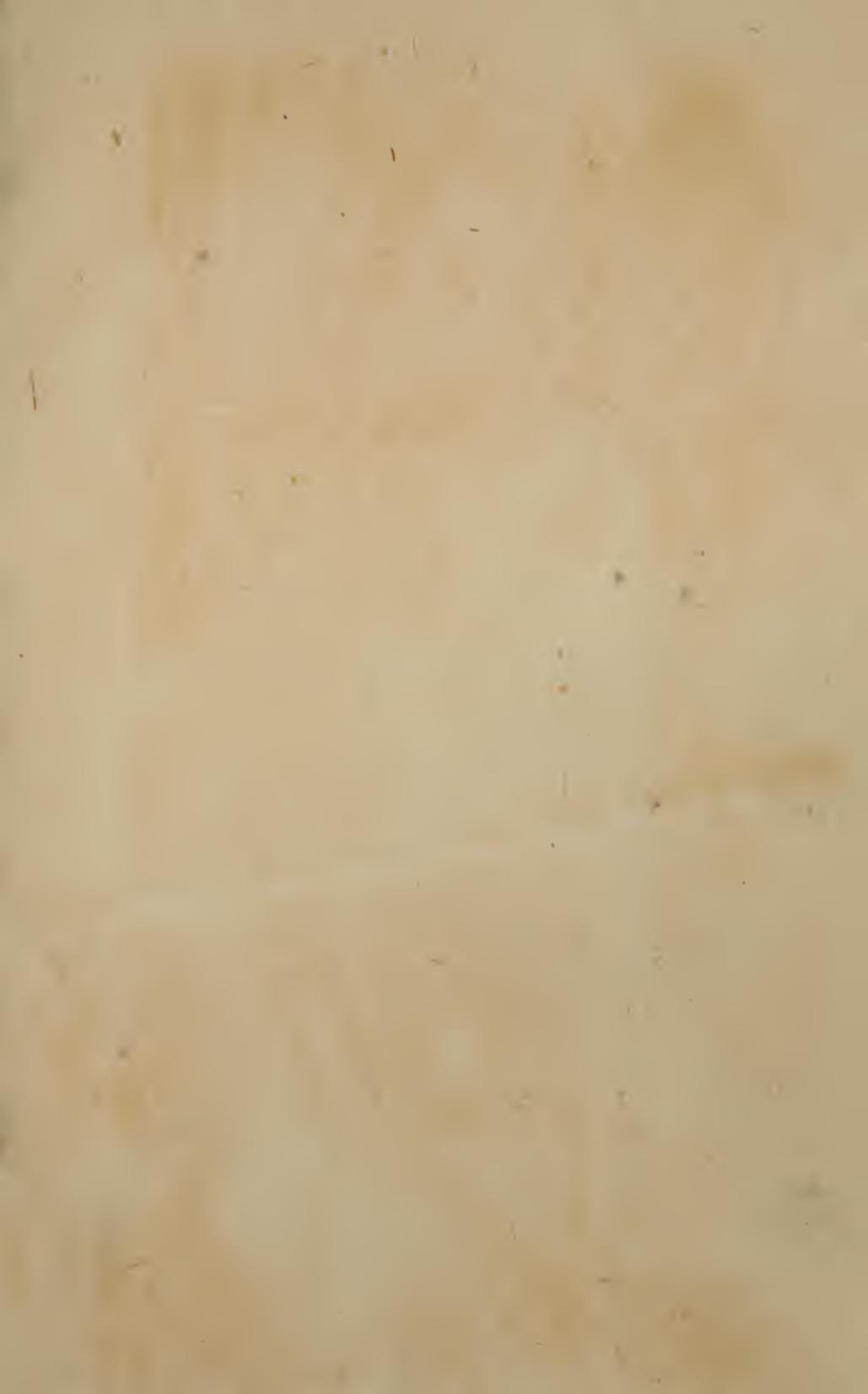


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BIRD-HUNTING
THROUGH WILD EUROPE



GRIFFON VULTURE AT NEST (GYPS FULVUS)

Frontispiece

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BIRD-HUNTING

THROUGH WILD EUROPE

BY

R. B. LODGE

AUTHOR OF

'PICTURES OF BIRD-LIFE,' 'THE BIRDS AND THEIR STORY,' 'THE STORY OF
HEDGEROW AND POND,' 'ONE HUNDRED PHOTOS OF BRITISH BIRDS'

With 124 Illustrations, from Photographs by the Author

London

ROBERT CULLEY

25-35 CITY ROAD, AND 26 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

59.82 (4)

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

45-159323-March 12

INTRODUCTION

IN the opening chapter of my *Pictures of Bird-Life*, written in 1903, I indicated roughly, in the following words, what a splendid field there was for the photographic ornithologist in various parts of Europe :

‘ A most interesting expedition could be made now in pursuit of the Eagles and Vultures of Southern Europe. In Spain alone there are still to be found, in the big pine-woods and rugged sierras, five different kinds of Eagles and four kinds of Vultures. Some of these are yearly decreasing in numbers, and in a few more years will be extremely rare. Hungary and the country round the Danube is also particularly rich in raptorial and marsh birds.’

I had already visited the marismas of the Guadalquivir once, Denmark once, and Holland three times ; and had succeeded in photographing many interesting species at home : for example, the Spoonbill, the Purple Heron, Little Egret, Buff-backed Heron, Glossy Ibis, Black Tern, White

Stork, Grey Shrike, and other interesting forms of bird life which it would be hopeless to expect to find in this country. I had also seen many others which had succeeded in evading the near approach of my camera. But *l'appetit vient en mangeant*, and I was bitten with an insatiable longing to add more rarities to my list of photographic subjects. Lack of means, however, was an effectual bar to any further pursuit on my part, especially in those countries which I was most anxious to visit. However, by good fortune, I have in quite an unexpected way been enabled to make three most interesting expeditions to some of the least known and most out-of-the-way parts of Southern and Eastern Europe in the search for rare members of the bird world, and the present volume deals with my experiences and adventures.

To me these expeditions after birds, in spite of the difficulties and hardships inseparable from working in the inaccessible marshes and mountain solitudes, where alone one may expect to have any success, have been most intensely enjoyable. Many rare birds, quite new to me, have been found and photographed at close quarters, many strange countries and strange people have been visited, and many friendships made. Fresh experience has also been gained in other directions, for while previous expeditions at home and abroad have been

made with camera only, photographs of wild and living birds in the native haunts being the sole object, in these last journeyings bird collecting, as well as egg collecting has been included in the programme.

The inhabitants of these wild countries attach so little importance to birds that they find it difficult to understand why any sane person should take the trouble and go to the expense of travelling about to photograph them or even to shoot them. No doubt in many cases they look upon the search for birds as merely an excuse, a blind to hide some reason of more importance, political or otherwise; especially when they see an imposing cavalcade of from half a dozen to a dozen or more mounted men. But perhaps the proverbial madness of all Englishmen accounts for much that is otherwise unaccountable in their eyes; and I must say that I have met with much genuine kindness and hospitality from the peasants and fishermen of the most remote regions, many of whom had never seen an Englishman before in the whole course of their lives. Few of them, indeed, had the slightest idea where England was situated, though they had a dim sort of idea that there was such a country somewhere.

My most grateful thanks are due to Baron Bornemisza, late vice-Consul for Austria-Hungary, at Durazzo in Albania, for the most generous hospitality and assistance during two seasons spent

in that country ; also to Herr Otto Hermann, and the ornithologists at the Bureau of Ornithology at Budapest, and Dr. von Madarasz of the Museum of that city, Herr Othmar Reiser of the Sarajevo Museum, Dr. Antipa of Buccarest, Dr. Jonescu and M. Panaitescu of Tulcea, Roumania ; also to Messrs. J. and A. McLean Marshall, and many others, some of whom I forbear to name at their own request, and others because their hospitality has, I fear, been somewhat overtaxed of late years by wandering ornithologists, and I am unwilling to abuse their kindness by running the risk of adding to their number.

R. B. LODGE.

June, 1908.

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BIRD-HUNTING THROUGH WILD EUROPE

I

BIRDS'-NESTING IN SPAIN

EARLY in March 1905, my friend M—— and myself left London bound for Andalusia, intent on seeing and photographing as many as possible of the Eagles, Vultures, and marsh birds of that prolific region.

Nowadays, according to the latest scientific classification, the Eagles and birds of prey have been deposed from the place which they long held at the head of the bird world. However, in popular estimation they still hold the imagination as kings and princes of the air, in spite of occasional questionable proceedings on the part of some of them.

Though the Golden Eagle is not uncommon even now in some parts of Scotland, the sight of the king of birds is not by any means a matter of daily

experience; while the White-tailed Eagle is now but seldom met with.

It would therefore be better for any one who is desirous of having something more than a chance sight of a passing Eagle to travel to a land where the preservation of game is not so rigorously carried out, where the noblest forms of animal life are not yet mercilessly exterminated as vermin, and where the balance of Nature is the only factor in the abundance or scarcity of any species.

Luckily, it is not necessary to travel very far. Twenty-four hours will bring one to the Spanish frontier, and in Spain the present fauna is something like that which existed in England some four or five hundred years ago. There the wolves still take toll of the flocks and herds during the winter, and, not content with the sheep, occasionally devour the shepherd as well. The Brown Bear and the Lynx still exist in certain parts, the former in the north, the latter, with the Wild Boar, in the tangled thickets and wooded solitudes of the south. The Eagles breed in security in the rocky heights of the sierras, and in the immense pine-forests and cork-woods. The Griffon Vulture and the Egyptian Vulture nest in the precipitous heights of the sierras, and the rare Lammergeier, now almost extinct in Europe, still exists in greatly diminished numbers in the most remote and inaccessible parts of the mountains.

One journey into Spain in 1897, and the experiences with marsh birds there met with, had imbued me with a love of that captivating country, and a great desire to see more of it and its people. I believe the usual thing for everybody who has once visited Spain is never to be content until he has been again and yet again. Certainly for the naturalist there is hardly a richer field in Europe. For, as will be seen from its position on the map, it lies right in the track of the chief migratory route by which birds passing up from the African continent reach their breeding-places in Northern Europe, and its close propinquity to that great continent induces others, which otherwise would not be included among the list of European birds at all, to cross the straits at Gibraltar.

After an interesting but uneventful journey we duly arrived at Ronda, our first destination, and found very comfortable quarters at the *fonda* over the railway station.

We had hardly been in the place an hour, and were on our first tour of inspection into the country round the town, when we saw our first Griffon. The great bird came sailing along just over our heads before we had gone half a mile, almost within pistol-shot. It was the first I had seen in a wild state; but though I have been able to observe hundreds since then, I do not think I have ever

seen one at such close quarters except when I have been well hidden near to a carcase and perfectly invisible.

We had half hoped to find them nesting in the *tajo*, the precipitous height on the edge of which is perched the ancient town of Ronda, in such a fashion that some of the houses actually overhang the perpendicular cliff. From the back windows of those houses there must be a clear fall of at least 500 feet.

Standing on the picturesque bridge which spans the ravine at the end of the town we could see, circling and wheeling far below, numbers of Lesser Kestrels, Crag Martins, and Pallid Swifts; but there was no evidence of any nesting colony of Griffons; nor, though we made inquiries, did we find anybody who knew anything about them. We did indeed meet one ancient *cazador*, sun-dried and lean, who professed that he could take us to a nest; so we engaged him on the chance of his being able to make good his word, though without any great expectation of success. We arranged for him to meet us on the morrow provided with a sheep's head, intended to be used as a bait for the automatic electric camera.

Our friend was possibly a good sportsman in his time, but that must have been some years ago. He was a nice old fellow, and we took rather a



FERNANDO FLORES AND HIS WIFE



INTERIOR OF SPANISH CHOZA

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liking to him ; but though he did his best he was very shaky, sometimes even wanting a helping hand over a difficult bit.

Under his guidance we went to the bottom of the cliff by a winding pathway ; and then followed a rocky stream, horribly polluted by the town sewage, until the valley opened out on one side, having a great semi-circular wall of rock on our right. The bottom of the valley was cultivated with olive groves and small fields, and from the perpendicular rock-face were occasional buttresses or spurs projecting into the valley. It was very evident that our guide knew of no nest, so one of these rock buttresses was selected on which to display the bait temptingly to any Vulture which might be soaring overhead. Up the rocky slope we scrambled, sometimes on all-fours, and holding on to tufts of herbage or jutting stones until we arrived at the top, from which there was a fine view of the smiling valley laid out before us like a garden. As quickly as possible we adjusted the electric battery and carefully covered over the camera, to the electric shutter of which the bait was attached by a fine but strong thread.

We had intended remaining within sight of the arrangement in some crevice of the rock, but the broiling sun found out in turn each hiding-place we chose, and fairly scorched us out, the heat being to

me quite unbearable. Accordingly we sought shelter in one of the small, whitewashed cottages at no great distance, from which the spot could be watched through our glasses. Needless to say, we did not seek hospitality in vain, but were welcomed with true Spanish courtesy by the whole family. The master of the house was out working in his fields, but arrived about an hour later, and we were soon on the most friendly footing, and satisfying to the best of our abilities their questions about the outside world. In their eyes—for I think not one of them had ever been ten miles from the spot—we were wonderful travellers; our friend Fernando Flores declaring that we must have spent our whole lives *corriendo por todo el mundo*, running over the whole world. And as M—— had visited India, China, Japan, Vancouver, the States, &c., and I had seen South America, Newfoundland, the West Indies, the Mediterranean, and several European countries, our collective travels certainly did cover a good part of the world's surface.

As we had brought provisions for the day we had no need to share their midday meal, to which we were invited: a central dish of stew, from which the family at the circular table helped themselves with wooden spoons, the meal being washed down by deep draughts of water from the porous, chatty-like jars kept in the coolest corner. Delightfully



FILLING THEIR CANTAROS

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cool and refreshing this water was, though I much fear that it came from the sewage-tainted stream which flowed past their door, for before leaving I photographed the two pretty daughters filling their *cantaros* from its polluted depths.

I must say that the sight gave me sundry misgivings, for I had refreshed myself more than once while waiting ; however, no ill results followed, and perhaps after all the drinking-water had come from some purer source, for in Spain they well know and appreciate the value of good and pure water.

We had not forgotten the Vultures, but from time to time kept a look-out from the doorway. We started with fair hopes of success, for while setting the bait out and arranging the camera we had noticed a soaring Griffon which had evidently espied the bait. Sure enough before long, four, and presently ten, of these great scavengers of Nature were wheeling over the spot. But for some reason or other they gradually soared higher and higher until they were mere specks in the blue sky, and finally disappeared altogether. Then four or five of the smaller Egyptian Vultures took their place, but though these came much nearer, some of them even settling on the hillside not far away, they did not actually touch the bait, and at the approach of sunset we had to take up the camera.

I think that if we had procured a bigger bait, say a goat or a lamb, we should have had a better chance of success. They told me that if we could wait for five or six weeks for the next bull-fight we should be certain of success, for the carcasses of the unfortunate horses would be thrown over the cliff near where we were, and the Griffons would assemble from far and wide for the feast. This, however, we could not do, for we had made arrangements to visit Malaga and the surrounding country before going to the marismas.

But before taking this journey we were tempted by the waiter at our hotel to make a day's expedition to a small place along the line at no very great distance, where he declared we could see Vultures on their nests close to the railway station.

As Prince Rudolf in his book describes just such a nesting colony of Griffons somewhere in this region, but without mentioning the name of the place, we went off in full expectation of seeing them at least, even if it should be impracticable to do anything more. But our waiter had either made a mistake in naming the station, or he had imagined the whole thing, for on alighting we found ourselves in the midst of a plain, with no possible nesting-place of Vultures within two or three miles.

As there was no return train for many hours we

made the best of the situation by wandering along a small, muddy river, in which were lying immersed hosts of reddish-coloured swine, and inquiring of all and sundry whom we met if they knew of any Eagles' nests.

The sight of two hot and perspiring Englishmen loaded with heavy bags and odd-looking impedimenta, staggering along over the fields under a broiling sun, and making such inquiries, would in most countries cause surprise, and questions as to our sanity. However, nothing can surprise a Spaniard or upset his grave courtesy. One and all of these swarthy labourers toiling on the fields, burnt by the torrid sun into the semblance of negroes, gave us polite attention ; and presently one of them said that he knew of none himself, but would go with us and find some one who did.

Forthwith he left his hoe sticking up in the ground and followed us, or, to be more precise, preceded us. After perhaps an hour's walk he found a goat-herd, who sent his boy, while he himself looked after his flocks, along with our new-found friend to show us the way. Sure enough, on proceeding farther he took us to the entrance of a forbidding-looking gorge, where on one side the perfectly perpendicular rock rose to the height of quite 600 or 800 feet. Then, pointing with his staff, we beheld the desired *nido del aquila* two-thirds

of the way up, where the crag overhung. The owner of the nest, a fine Bonelli's Eagle, then flew off, giving us a good view as she crossed the gorge and disappeared.

It was in a perfectly hopeless situation; for even if we had come provided with a rope long enough, the cliff overhung at this particular spot so far that it would have been impossible for any human being to reach the nest, and we could only gaze at it with interest. It probably contained young, Eagles being very early breeders. All my attempts to photograph the nest, either from the bottom or by climbing up the opposite side as far as possible and using the telephoto lens, were of no avail. Such a strong wind came rushing through the gorge that it was impossible to keep the camera steady.

We had a hot and weary tramp back, and when our guide invited us, with Spanish politeness, to visit his home and rest *en la sombra de la sala de mi casa* (in the shade of the hall of my house), we accepted gratefully.

The 'hall of his house' we found a very grandiloquent figure of speech, for the house consisted of but one room with earthen floor; but the welcome was worthy of a palace, and when they prepared a meal for us we were able to do full justice to it. In a big wooden bowl maize bread was broken up and soaked in water, oil, and vinegar. This was

placed between us, and being each provided with a wooden spoon we were soon busily engaged, and found it very cool and satisfying after our exertions.

Our trip to Malaga may be briefly described as a failure. The sierras which surround the town are, I believe, good, and the district had been recommended as quite worth visiting, but we were unfortunate in not being able to find any reliable guide who could direct us in which quarter to try. We were disappointed also in the town itself. The drought, under which Spain suffered so terribly that year, was beginning to make itself felt, and the clouds of dust, which lay to the thickness of four inches in the streets, were intolerable. The smells everywhere were terrible; and, to crown all this, our hotel, one of the biggest in the place, was alive with bugs! Insect pests are the curse of Spanish travel. We had changed our room soon after our arrival because it stank so abominably of drains that it was impossible to remain in it. We had a double-bedded room as usual, and I slept all right, but poor M—— spent half the night in agony, until, in desperation, he unpacked his luggage and unearthed a box of Keating's insect powder and plentifully besprinkled his bedding with it. After that he had a little unquiet sleep, and in the morning we examined the field of battle. The 'Keating's' had done its work faithfully. We

recovered forty bodies of the slain enemy and arranged them in rows on the pillow, where they made quite an imposing show. Then, ringing the bell, we confronted the chambermaid with the awful spectacle, expecting her to be overwhelmed with confusion. Unfortunately, my knowledge of Spanish was not equal to the emergency. My education had been neglected, for I didn't even know the Spanish name of the obnoxious pest in question. *Malos insectos* (bad insects) was the best epithet I could think of on the spur of the moment. But she was quite equal to the occasion, for pointing to the window, which we had opened, she replied, that if Englishmen *would* insist on having the windows open they must put up with *malos insectos*. Now I knew perfectly well that the *insectos* had not entered by the window, but were, so to speak, original inhabitants, born and bred on the premises. But all this was beyond my powers of explanation, so we had to leave her victorious after all.

Being disappointed in our expectations of Malaga, we took the train to Gibraltar and Algeciras, and spent a weary day's journey in going this short distance. From Algeciras we chartered a carriage and four—or three, I forget which. I rather think there were two horses and a mule. But, at any rate, I am sure of this, that it was a most imposing-looking equipage in which we started, to the admiration of

half the youthful populace of the place, for a spot not far from the little town of Tarifa.

Here we found comfortable quarters in the cottage of a labourer. The accommodation, it is true, was somewhat primitive, but the two little whitewashed rooms were beautifully clean, and we saw no *malos insectos* or other pests. Above all, old Juan, his wife, and their son, did their best to make us feel at home and comfortable.

We were surrounded on each side by a level plain encircled with mountains, and immediately in front of the house was a large marsh, or what would have been such under ordinary conditions. Now it was partly dried up, and at the back of the marsh flowed a sluggish river. We found here a fair amount of bird life, Whiskered Terns (*Hydrochelidon hybrida*) were constantly seen hovering and skimming over the reeds in some numbers, and small flocks of Buff-backed Herons (*Ardea bubulcus*) attending on the herds of cattle feeding on the plain; but the date (April 13) was too early for any hopes of seeing nests of these species. Marsh Harriers were fairly common, and also Purple Herons, and a few specimens of the White Stork were observed. On the 19th of April we watched three Cranes (*Grus communis*) which were evidently thinking of commencing nesting operations; but though we waded, and systematically searched, a large expanse of marsh,

we failed to find any nest. Probably these birds had only just arrived. On the same day we saw Turtle Doves. On the 13th of April Cuckoos, Nightingales, and Woodchat Shrikes were observed, and on the 15th of April there was a sudden invasion of a large flock of Bee-eaters, which sat in rows on the single telegraph wire which passed our door. The beautiful Blue Rock Thrush was fairly common; we had also seen it at Gibraltar. Dartford Warblers had young birds; they were very abundant in the tangled scrub growing at the base of the spurs of rocks and the outlying sierras. While searching for a nest of this small species M—— was fortunate enough to put off an Egyptian Vulture from her nest in a low rock, and to reach the two richly-coloured eggs by means of his nesting-stick. This is a telescopic arrangement fitted at one end with a mirror set at such an angle that the contents of a nest can be easily seen, even though it may be several feet above one's head. There is also a small landing-net in which these contents can be scooped out.

While here we tried again for an automatic photograph of Vultures, using as bait the head and inside of a kid we had purchased from our host; but though I carried this bait about from day to day, until it became decidedly offensive, in trying fresh situations, we had no luck. Here, by the by, the Spaniards always declared that our bait didn't smell

strong enough for the Vultures to be able to find it. This belief is very common, that the Vultures find their food by smell. It has, of course, been proved beyond question that they do so by sight alone.

Indeed it was most noticeable that, every time I tried putting out a bait it was invariably discovered by a Griffon before I had finished concealing the camera; and perhaps that is why they refused to approach it. At this place also the Egyptian Vultures settled on the ground close to the bait without touching it.

One day, while wading in the marsh, a large number of Griffons were observed in the air at a little distance: there must have been some hundreds of them. Thinking that a carcass was probably somewhere about, we left our search for Cranes' nests and went off to investigate. Unfortunately, we had noticed the birds just too late, for they had almost demolished the carcass—that of a large pig—and were rapidly departing. By the time I reached the spot there was nothing left but the head, the backbone, and one or two of the legbones, which were picked quite clean and bare. The rest had vanished. Sitting round these scanty remains was a ring of about thirty Griffons. There was a donkey feeding near, and creeping up behind it with the camera I was able to approach near enough to focus the

curious scene. I ought, of course, to have exposed one plate before proceeding further ; but, thinking that the birds were gorged and unwilling to fly, I foolishly attempted to get a little nearer. Of course they all rose and flew off, the last to depart being a couple of Marsh Harriers, which were engaged in clearing off the smaller morsels and débris.

We left the automatic camera to look after itself while we went back for dinner, but this only resulted in the photograph of a hungry dog !

Soon after this disappointment we determined to visit the range of cliffs in the distance opposite the house, one high crag in particular looking as if it would be worth a visit.

On reaching the river, which was a fair-sized one, we had some doubts about the whereabouts of the ford, and inquired at a *choza*, a rude hut of branches, near by. The owner, a typical, sunburnt Andaluz, came out himself, with characteristic politeness, to show us where we could cross.

These Spanish plains in spring-time, before the fierce sun has scorched and burnt everything up, are ablaze with brightly-coloured flowers. Sometimes we waded knee-deep through acres of pink mallows, at other times thousands of blue irises made the prevailing colour blue. Patches of silvery-grey



NEST OF CALANDRA LARK (MELANOCONYTHA CALANDRA)

thistles in some places gave a peculiar grey bloom to the landscape. Calandra Larks and Short-toed and Crested Larks rose before us, and on the cultivated cornland we put up several Little Bustards and Quails. The former show a good deal of white on the wing. Nearing the slopes of the hills, brilliantly-plumaged Bee-eaters and Woodchat Shrikes, their red heads shining like blood in the bright sun, sat on the oak- and cork-trees, watching for passing insects.

The base of all these rocky crags is festooned and entwined with clinging, prickly briars, which hold you fast in their embrace and trip up your feet, and do all in their power to obstruct the way; and after our long tramp with heavy cameras in the broiling heat we were glad enough of a rest in the shade of some cork-trees. Scanning the lofty face of the rock before us, we were delighted to find that in many of the holes and crevices, wherewith the precipice was pitted, Griffon Vultures were sitting motionless on their nests. Dwarfed by their colossal surroundings, these great birds, which have a spread of wing of about ten feet, appeared to be no larger than Starlings. Others soared high overhead, passing and repassing as they circled round the summit of the rock. From below it appeared to be unassailable, but, as we found out later, many of these rocks, which appear so formidable from below, are

comparatively easy to climb from the top, even without a rope.

While we were watching with interest the Griffons in their mountain home, a smaller bird, with whitish breast, appeared and settled on a dead tree which projected near the top, and we recognized the noble form of a Bonelli's Eagle. Presently it left its perch and sailed round in front of the great crag. But, though so much smaller, it appeared to disdain the too close propinquity of its larger but more ignoble neighbours; for, on one of the Griffons venturing too near, it made a most magnificent 'stoop' and struck the Vulture with such force that the great bird fairly toppled over, and fell several feet in the air before it could recover itself.

It was a splendid example of natural falconry on a large scale, and reminded us at once of the antagonism and fierce conflicts between the Eagles and the Cinereous Vultures in the forests of Slavonia, so graphically described by the late Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria in his book *Sport and Ornithology*.

A little to the right of this Griffonry was a gap through which flowed a small, rocky stream, and on the other side of this stream the rocks were much lower. Here, fortunately, we found a Griffon quietly sitting in her nest in a big hole by the side of a half-grown young bird. After a little manoeuvring by climbing up an adjacent hillside so as to clear



GRIFFON VULTURE IN NEST (GYPS FULVUS)

some trees which obstructed the view from below, I was able to bring the camera and telephoto lens to bear on her at a workable distance. It was really a great stroke of luck to find a Griffon's nest in such an accessible situation, for as a rule they choose a perpendicular precipice of anything over 500 or 600 feet in which to nest. The curious part of it was that so long as I was alone the bird sat quietly on her nest, and I was free to move about in full view of her without disturbing her in the least ; but as soon as M—— or the young Spaniard appeared on the scene she flew off, and would not return until they had retired.

Only a few yards from this nest I had put off from a cave higher up a fine Egyptian Vulture, and could see the outside sticks of her nest projecting over the edge. I tried hard to climb to this nest, which was not more than sixty feet up, but could not manage more than half-way, and there stuck, so I had to give it up.

All that night after our return I lay awake considering how I could master this difficult bit of rock-face ; and at last I thought I had hit upon a feasible idea. The next day, therefore, we hired some horses and rode back, provided with a coil of rope and the nesting-stick before described. The idea was for me to climb up as far as I could, and then, by placing the nesting-stick extended to its full

length, about ten feet, in the bight of the rope, to hitch it over a projecting rock, haul myself up, and repeat the process until I reached the nest. The descent would be easy with the doubled rope. It worked all right at first, and I reached a spot much higher than before, and not very far from the nest; but from this spot I could ascend no farther. It was impossible to find any corner on to which to hitch the rope. What corners there were were inclined the wrong way, and on the slightest pull the rope slipped back. So once more I had to give it up and descend empty-handed. All I could do was to photograph the rock from below and make some more exposures of the Griffon, which proved quite as obliging as on the previous day.

In the meantime we had set an old Spaniard to work, making inquiries among the goatherds, and offering a small reward for news of any Eagles' nests. One day he told us he had information of one to which he could conduct us when we liked. Accordingly we started off next day with him and another Spaniard, who had hired for us a small donkey with panniers, in which we could stow the cameras and enough food and wine for a day's work.

We found the heat too terrific and the distances too great to carry everything ourselves over such rough ground. Even with this extra assistance it



NEST OF EGYPTIAN VULTURE (PERCNOPTERUS NEOPHRON)

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was a good day's work, what with the long walk and the climbing and clambering about the rocks ; so much so that our guide—as we both refused to do so—for the greater part of the return journey was glad to mount the poor little donkey, which made no bother about carrying him as well as her proper load.

The Eagle's nest was situated in an isolated rocky crag, perhaps 100 feet in height, in the middle of a plain. As we approached, guided by two goat-herds whose flocks were grazing near by, a Bonelli's Eagle flew off, revealing her nest high up near the summit. Making a long *détour* by means of a narrow, slippery goat-track, we came out at the back, and then clambered along the top from one great boulder to another until we were immediately over the nest. Then craning our necks over the edge we could see below us a great, flat nest in which was a large, single egg.

I was much relieved at the sight ; first, because it was a very late date for eggs of Bonelli's Eagle, and, secondly, because I had somewhat rashly undertaken, if there should be an egg, to take it myself, and Bonelli's Eagle has the worst possible reputation for building in inaccessible situations—'places that make one's flesh creep to look at,' says Chapman in *Wild Spain*—and I was prepared for a much more difficult task.

After the Alpine rope had been securely knotted round my chest, my three companions, bracing themselves firmly one above the other, lowered me over the edge until I stood upright in the nest. Holding up the egg to show to the goatherds who had remained below, I gave the signal to the men above, and was quickly hauled up with the egg safe in my pocket. It was very long and pointed, a dirty white with rusty-coloured stains, and proved to be addled. This was fortunate, however, for us ; for, had things gone well with it, there should by this date (April 20) have been a half-grown Eaglet in the nest.¹

While eating our lunch under some small trees near the foot of this crag we found that a Goldfinch was quietly sitting on her nest just over our heads. There was another nest in a neighbouring tree. The *Gilguero* is exceedingly common throughout Spain, perhaps on account of the abundance of its favourite food, the thistle. Later we discovered numbers of them nesting in orange-trees. These Spanish Goldfinches are small, but very brightly coloured.

After this we proceeded towards the coast in search of the nest of a Golden Eagle, *Aquila real*, as the Spaniards call it, of which we had tidings

¹ In the following year a friend found in this same nest a young Golden Eagle in the middle of April.



NEST OF BONELLI'S EAGLE (AQUILA BONELLI)

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from the goatherds. Following our guide, after we had hobbled the donkey at the nearest available spot, we clambered for some distance over a series of huge boulders, by degrees getting higher and higher, until we arrived at the verge of a tremendous cliff. I had carried a pair of *alparagatas* in my bag, and put them on as soon as there was any climbing to do. These are the canvas rope-soled shoes so common in Spain, and are by far the best things I know for rock-work, much better than the raw hide *opankis* I used later in the Balkans. In them one can go in ease and comfort over places where I, for one, would have to go down on hands and knees if clad in ordinary boots. Our old guide skipped about like an ancient billy-goat, and we were able to follow him without any difficulty.

But we could see no signs of any Eagle's nest until I fired a pistol, when out swept, a few yards to our right, with a tremendous rustle of big wing-feathers, not the expected Eagle, but an immense Griffon Vulture.

Not one in ten of these goatherds, though they must see Eagles and Vultures every day of their lives, know the difference between them, so that, in spite of their willingness to give information, no dependence can be put upon its correctness.

The Griffon had appeared from a ledge not far down the precipice, and the next thing was to make

an attempt to reach the spot. The guide went first to reconnoitre and was soon lost to sight ; but after a few minutes we could hear his hail and see his head over a rock corner. Shouting out that there were eggs, he directed us to make the best of our way down to where he was. Our path ran downwards in a slanting direction. The rock was composed of titanic boulders, many of them as big as a room in an ordinary house ; and from one to another of these we had to drop or make our way as best we could. Sometimes we were obliged to slide down a short incline, only to be brought up by the next obstacle ; but after a rough scramble all four of us found ourselves actually standing in the Griffon's nest.

I had been a little hampered by the heavy camera-case on my back and the strapped-up tripod carried in my hand, and was not sorry to find myself at last, with my photographic equipment uninjured, in this great nest, from which we enjoyed a magnificent view.

Looking straight down under our feet we could see, 1,000 feet below us, a tiny patch of yellow sand on which the little waves were lazily rolling ; while far away to the horizon the sea shimmered and shone in the glorious sunshine, with opalescent tints of blue, green, and purple, until lost in the blue sky above.

In the nest, which was very large and well made



YOUNG GRIFFON VULTURE IN NEST

of sticks outside, with a finer lining of grasses and small stuff, was a young bird. This youngster, which was still in down, appeared to be in a very limp condition and unable to raise its body or even its head, but lay quite prone and prostrate in the bottom of the nest. Whether this was due to the heat or to an enforced fast of some duration it is, of course, impossible to say. It is well known that the adult Vultures, as indeed is the case with all birds of prey, can exist without food for an almost incredible number of days; and that when they get the chance they make up for past shortcomings in one tremendous gorge. Of course even in Spain it must happen sometimes that the supply of carcasses runs short for the enormous number of the great flesh-eating birds, which are entirely dependent on what dead bodies they can find—for they *never* kill anything for themselves. And if these times of scarcity happen in the spring, it follows that the young, as well as the adult birds, must sometimes be obliged to go without food for some time. Be this as it may, this young Griffon appeared to be in the last stage of exhaustion.

Still lower down, on a ledge which we could only reach with our rope, were two more Griffons' nests, each of which held one great, round, white egg, and also the nest of an Egyptian Vulture, with two beautifully marked eggs of a rich reddish-brown.

This concluded a good day's work, for we had a long march home, where we arrived very tired and hungry, but very well satisfied with the results. One egg of Bonelli's Eagle, two eggs of Griffon Vulture, and two eggs of Egyptian Vulture, constituted a very good day's takings, without reckoning the Goldfinches' and other small eggs we had picked up accidentally on our way.

This was our last day's work in this locality, for we had arranged for our carriage to come out again from Algeciras to take us on to the railway between Cadiz and Jerez-de-la Frontera.

On the way we passed a great assemblage of Griffons hurrying at full speed from every point of the compass, and converging in hundreds in a field at a little distance from the road, where, no doubt, was a carcase in process of being devoured. There was no time to stop, however, for we had before us a journey of something like forty miles, and the certainty that if we missed our train we should have from twelve to twenty-four hours to wait. But for some distance as we drove along, belated birds passed us, all bound for the same spot.

This well illustrates their method, and explains why it is that so many congregate in so short a time in a spot where perhaps the keenest observer would fail to discover a single Vulture. They spend the day soaring in great circles at an immense height,

from whence they can survey a great expanse of country. Nothing escapes their telescopic gaze, and at the first sight of a carcass the bird which first notices it descends. Other Griffons at varying distances see this descent, and, knowing exactly what it portends, also make for the same spot; and so it goes on, for birds still farther off watch the proceedings and also hurry down, they in their turn being followed by others, until hundreds of hungry scavengers are making up for their long fast, and trying to bolt as much food as possible in the shortest possible time.

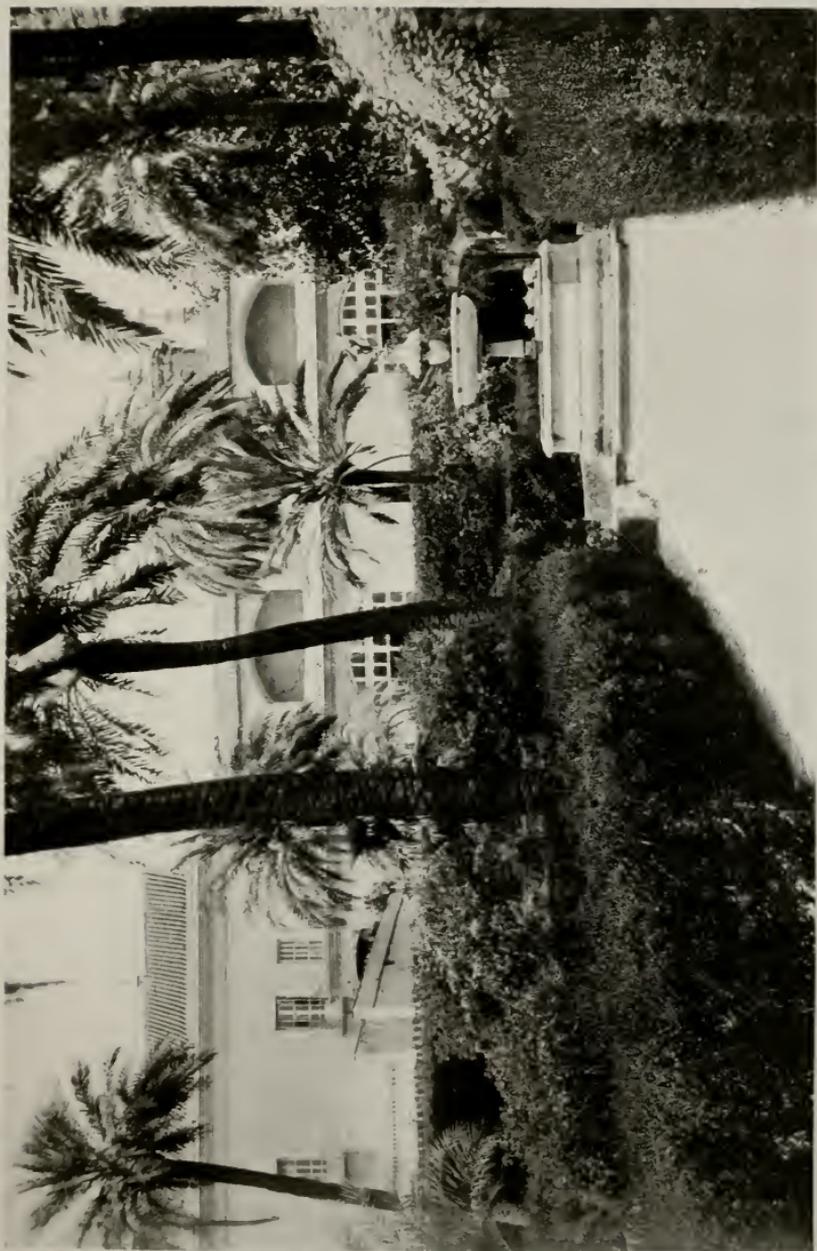
It is quite usual to hear people express their disgust at the very idea of a Vulture; but I think this prejudice is merely sentimental. Certainly their habits and food do not recommend them, however useful they may be; but their appearance is exceedingly picturesque, and the sight of a number simultaneously on the wing is a most interesting experience. When at rest on their native rocks, too, their huge size, and their statuesque and motionless pose amid the grandeur of the massive rocks and beetling precipices in which they live, combine to invest them with a certain beauty and distinction of their own.

The Egyptian Vulture, though its habits are even more repulsive and disgusting than those of the Griffon, is a most striking-looking and handsome

bird ; and seen on the wing at close quarters, with its jet black primaries and creamy white plumage, it has quite a distinguished appearance.

On reaching the railway at San Fernando we were struck by the mountains of salt. All round Cadiz there are miles of *salinas*, where the salt is obtained by evaporation, and is piled up in glistening pyramids. The sea-water here is intensely saline, but the salt is very coarse and badly prepared, and not by any means free from a proportion of dirt.

After roughing it in the country, we now enjoyed to the full, for several days, the hospitality of our friends at Jerez, while preparations were made for our journey to the marisma district beyond the Guadalquivir.



IN THE ALCAZAR GARDENS, SEVILLE

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II

BIRDS'-NESTING IN SPAIN—*continued*

WE had already seen some of the effects of the disastrous drought, and had heard dismal tales of the condition of the marismas ; but when we arrived there we found that the reality exceeded our worst expectations.

I could hardly believe my eyes, or realize that it was the same district I had visited in 1897. In ordinary years this region is covered with shallow water during the winter and spring months, which gradually dries up under the burning heat of the summer sun. As far as the eye can see, shut in between desolate sand-dunes, the home of many rabbits, and extensive pine-woods, inhabited only by Eagles, Ravens and Kites, and tangled, thorny thickets, which shelter the Red Deer, the Lynx, and the Wild Boar, are leagues and leagues of water stretching to the horizon. In the shallows stand thousands of Flamingoes in long lines, just like regiments of soldiers. Circling flocks of Gulls and Terns are screaming overhead, while on the moist, muddy

shores, and wading about in the water, are countless thousands of marsh birds—Godwits, Curlews, Knots, Dunlins, Plovers, Stilts, and Avocets. For through these marismas must pass twice each year more than half of the wading birds bound for the north of Europe. Those Knots, for instance, are not stopping here, but merely feeding and resting on their long journey to their nesting-grounds round the Pole. To-morrow they will probably have passed on and their places will have been taken by others. The deeper pools, fringed with reeds and tamarisks, are resorted to by the beautiful Southern Herons, which nest in great numbers on the submerged bushes.

This year, however, in April, where there should have been this great expanse of water, alive with an infinite variety of graceful bird forms, there was absolutely no water at all for miles. The ground was perfectly dry and baked by the sun to the hardness of brick. Around the few damp spots in the deeper parts where there still lingered a little moisture were pitiable groups of half-starved cattle and horses, struggling in the stiff mud up to their bellies in order to reach what little vegetation still remained, and find a few drops of water to quench their thirst. It was a dreadful sight; and if this was the state of affairs in April one does not like to think of their sufferings during the long, scorching



SPANISH CHOZAS



THE EDGE OF THE SAND DUNES

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days of summer. The Vultures would probably have cause to remember 1905 as a year of unusual plenty. For no rain fell until late in the autumn, the drought having lasted for ten months; the crops were an utter failure, and the cattle perished by thousands.

There was the greatest distress among the population, and starving mobs of people paraded the towns clamouring for work and bread. In ordinary years brigandage in Spain is almost stamped out, or at least kept under by the efficiency of the *Guardas civiles*; but in times of scarcity like these it is apt to crop up unexpectedly, especially in remote districts and in the sierras. Smuggling, too, is never altogether kept under—desperate conflicts between armed *contrabandistas* and the civil guards being of constant occurrence, and it does not take much to convert a *contrabandista* into a brigand. We had, in fact, been strongly advised not to travel unarmed; and when we left Gibraltar many of the residents who have country houses in the neighbourhood were shutting them up and coming into the town with their families and movables.

Under these circumstances we could not expect to find a great number of birds in the marismas. And indeed there was hardly one to be seen, nothing to break the bare expanse of sun-baked mud except the deceptive glamour of the mirage. In the middle

distance would be plainly visible sometimes broad, reed-fringed pools, or busy havens full of shipping, with the towers and cupolas of a phantom town bathed in a mysterious golden haze. You knew it was but the mirage, that such things had no existence; but so realistic was the deception that it was almost impossible to believe that it was simply an illusion.

A few Buff-backed Herons were to be seen in attendance on the groups of half-starved cattle. They are called *Garrapatosas*—‘tick-eaters’—by the Spaniards, from their habit of perching on the backs of cattle and horses in order to free them from their insect pests; but their usual nesting-place, a remote lagoon surrounded by leagues of desolate sand-dunes and forests, had been completely dried up and obliterated, literally stamped out of existence by the cattle seeking in their thirst the last drop of moisture.

Gone was all the wealth of bird life which makes this region of such intense interest to the naturalist. The Flamingoes, the graceful Little Egrets, the Night and Squacco Herons, the funereal Glossy Ibis, the quaint Stilts, and Avocets had not arrived this season, or if they had arrived they had gone on elsewhere. The few Pratincoles, Redshanks, and Plovers which could be seen did not appear to be nesting.

In the extensive pine-forests which intersect and surround the marismas there was an equal change. The whole district had passed into different hands, the Spanish Duke, the former owner, having sold it to a capitalist. In the place of the solitude I had found in 1897 there were now armies of men, with scores of wagons and horses, engaged in felling the largest of the trees and in conveying them to the river, where a great steam saw-mill cut them up for tramway sleepers before being shipped to their destination; and the peaceful stillness of the forest was broken by the buzz and hum of machinery, the sharp strokes of the axe, and the shouts of the labourers.

As we gazed around us at the havoc they had made, our hopes for Eagles and Kites dwindled away to zero. Every tree of any size had vanished; the charcoal-burners' fires were disposing of the piles of branches, and even the very roots and stumps, which were all that was left to remind me of the monarchs of the forest of former years, were being howked up and dragged out of the earth for charcoal.

It seemed quite ridiculous to expect an Eagle, or even a Kite, to build on the puny little trees which we saw. But to our surprise we found many Kites and Black Kites nesting on the small pines, and whenever we saw a silver poplar towering over

the surrounding pines it was always worth a visit. Many Booted Eagles (*Aquila pennata*) were nesting in them.

And here I may mention that the silver poplar is a favourite tree with the large raptors, and is often chosen by them to nest in: I can recall many instances. Besides these Booted Eagles we found in these trees a nest of the Short-toed or Snake Eagle (*Circaëtus gallicus*). In Albania, in 1906, I found a nest of the Sea Eagle (*Haliaëtus albicilla*) in a silver poplar, and in the following year nests of Black Vulture (*Vultur monachus*) and Imperial Eagle (*Aquila imperialis*) in the same kind of tree in a Roumanian forest.

To show the abundance of raptorial birds in these forests, in a space of not more than a few acres were the nests of a Black Kite, a Short-toed Eagle, and a Booted Eagle, and none of them were half a mile from a village.

The first nest we found was that of a Black Kite, placed at the summit of a small pine-tree. As it contained three well-marked eggs, a choice collection of old rags, and an empty matchbox, I carried the camera up and photographed the nest *in situ*, as it has been said that the Black Kite does not use rags in constructing its nest. We had seen the bird leave the nest, so that there was no doubt about its being that of a Black Kite (*Milvus*



NEST OF BLACK KITE (*MILVUS MIGRANS*), SHOWING ARRANGEMENT OF RAGS



NEST OF SHORT-TOED EAGLE (CIRCAËTUS GALLICUS)

migrans). The Common Kite (*Milvus regalis*) not only uses rags, but also horse dung, and almost invariably a piece of newspaper is to be found in its nest.

A few yards farther on was an enormous nest in a silver poplar, from which a Short-toed Eagle flew off. M——, who had climbed up, had some difficulty in reaching over the edge of the nest, but shouted that he could feel an egg. This he brought down, and as this Eagle lays but one egg, generally speaking, we naturally supposed that there were no more. Then, as it was impossible to get above the nest for a photograph without knocking it all to pieces, we went back for a saw and a rope, and I ascended the tree and cut off the whole of the upper part of it, including the nest, and lowered it to the ground by means of the rope. It was a tough job, and required careful engineering to avoid a broken limb or being swept out of the tree with the fall; but by cutting through a double stem, and using the fork that was left as a pulley for the rope, and having two men below to hang on with all their strength and weight at the moment when the saw cut through the great mass above me, we managed to get it safely to the ground without accident. But, most unfortunately, during this lowering a second egg rolled out of the nest, and was of course smashed. It is so extremely unusual

for this Eagle to lay two eggs that we never thought of the possibility of there being another one.

Not a hundred yards from these two nests we found a Booted Eagle breeding in a poplar. And as the nest was not at a great height, and could be clearly seen from the ground, I constructed a shelter of tamarisk bushes, meaning to come the next day and try to photograph the bird itself before we started on a three days' visit to another distant part of the marismas. It was while waiting at this nest that I first heard the curious, musical note of the Booted Eagle.

Prince Rudolf says: 'The Pygmy Eagle has a fine, melodious voice—I might really speak of it as the singing Eagle; for the varied notes which it utters constitute a song, short indeed, but still not a call, and more like the utterances of the song-birds than the shrill whistle of the other raptorial birds.'

This last sentence exactly coincides with my experience. While crouching behind my rude shelter of branches I had heard a curious and rather melodious note repeated several times, with which I was quite unacquainted, and wondered what it could be. It resembled the sounds 'kivi-kivi,' and from the peculiar quality of the note I thought it proceeded from some bird about the



BOOTED EAGLE AT NEST (AQUILA PENNATA)

size of an Oriole, and looked around me to try to discover from whence it proceeded.

To my great surprise I found that it was the Booted Eagle, the owner of the nest. (The Booted Eagle is now, of course, universally recognized as identical with the Pygmy Eagle.) The bird was sitting on the ground quite close to me, in fact not more than six or seven yards away. But the moment I saw it it flew up, and I was afraid that it had seen me and taken the alarm. However, within half an hour it glided past me, low down, and swept upwards in a graceful curve to the nest, perching in the nest itself so that I could only see its head. It did not stay there more than a moment or two, however, but flew off to return again presently. This time it perched on the thick branch near the nest, where I had a good view of it, and on this same branch I photographed it twice before I left. The photograph shows well the peculiar feathering, right down to the toes, which gives it its name of 'Booted' Eagle, and caused it to be called the 'Eagle with the breeches' by Prince Rudolf's Slavonian climber.

There was one egg in the nest, which I took as we were going away, leaving a hen's egg in its place, for I expected she still had another egg to lay. However, on our return this hen's egg had gone, probably some hungry charcoal-burner or herdsman

had eaten it. These men take all the Kites' and Eagles' eggs they can find, for eating purposes, as well as any others they come across.

A boy told me he had recently eaten a clutch of Polluelas' eggs. This is the name they give to all the small Crakes. The Little Crake, Spotted Crake, and Baillon's Crake are all called 'Polluela.' On my previous visit I saw one of our men carry home a basketful of the eggs of Little Egrets and Buff-backed Herons for eating. I have myself partaken of omelets composed of Whiskered Terns' eggs.

For the expedition across the dried-up marismas we had three donkeys and a mule to convey our effects, for we were going to put up at a rude *choza*, or hut, belonging to one of the keepers, and it was necessary to take our bedding with us, as well as our food. This *choza* was entirely composed of pine-branches thatched with reeds: in the centre was the living-room, and at each end were small sleeping-rooms. In one of these our mattresses and bedding were spread on the earth floor.

Now I don't mind sleeping on the floor at all, and can make myself comfortable almost anywhere, but I must say I do not like to share rooms with hens, pigeons, and pigs. Whenever I came in there were always hens scratching about on our beds, and some pigeons roosted on the rafters over our heads, with



SOUTHERN GREY SHRIKE (*LANIUS MERIDIONALIS*)



CROSSING THE DRIED-UP MARISMA

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results that are easier imagined than described; several times I turned out a huge, gaunt-looking sow, which apparently considered that it had as much right there as myself. I thought differently about this, however, and had to enforce my ideas with a thick stick before she gave in and cleared out with a grunt.

But old Vasquez and his wife and two daughters did their best to make us comfortable, and notwithstanding these trifling drawbacks we had a very good time and enjoyed our stay in the wilds.

We found several more Kites, Black Kites, Ravens, and Booted Eagles, also two nests of Marsh Harrier, but the Waders and Herons, as I mentioned before, were non-existent. The drought had one unexpected effect, for it brought nearer to human habitation the famous wild camels which inhabit this region, the mention of which by Mr. Abel Chapman caused such a controversy in the *Field* some years ago. They are the descendants of a small herd imported many years ago from the Canary Islands, and being unsuitable for the work for which they were intended, were turned out or allowed to escape. Since then they have lived in the marismas in an entirely feral state, seldom seen by any human eye save that of an occasional herdsman or *guarda*, in the far distance. On several occasions we saw two at a distance of about 1,000 yards. From the

difference in size they were apparently an old camel and a young one about half-grown.

The Red Deer, of which there were great numbers, were also frequently to be seen close to the few and scattered huts. For this is one of the most famous and best-stocked sporting preserves in all Spain, both for big game, such as deer and boar, &c., and for ducks, geese, partridges, woodcocks, and snipe.

The sand-dunes, which cover an immense extent of country, and which are ever encroaching on the forests, and filling up the numerous lakes and lagoons with fine particles blown about by the wind, are a curious feature of this district. As these dunes advance one sees the pine-trees in all stages of being engulfed. Here is one buried but a foot or two, vigorous as ever ; there are trees the whole of whose trunks are completely covered with the advancing sand ; while higher up, bleached and lifeless branches, like the gaunt skeletons of extinct monsters, testify to the buried forests beneath. These sand-dunes are inhabited by rabbits, Stone Curlews, and Red-necked Nightjars, while the tamarisks and cistus bushes provide shelter for the Red Deer, and the *manchas*, or jungles, harbour many a Wild Boar. Over the dazzling surface dart the great green Eyed Lizards, some of them nearly three feet long, and snakes up to six feet ; while overhead are Kites and Eagles incessantly on the watch,



NEST OF BOOTED EAGLE (AQUILA PENNATA)

ready to devour either snake, lizard, or rabbit. A Kite we shot was packed full of pieces of a freshly-swallowed Eyed Lizard, while a Booted Eagle, in the uniform dark brown plumage, had evidently dined last on a rabbit. There are two distinct phases of plumage in this Eagle, which may perhaps account for the confusion which formerly prevailed, viz. a light form with white breast, and a dark form ; and, as in most raptorial birds, there is considerable variation in size. It is quite the smallest of the Eagles, being hardly larger than the Buzzard, and its eggs are, if anything, rather smaller than the Buzzard's. Two eggs are usually laid ; but in one nest—again in a large silver poplar—we found three young birds.

In another nest quite low down in a half-buried, spreading pine-tree at the edge of a sand-dune, were two eggs and the hind quarters of a rabbit. While I was engaged in photographing this nest, and was in the act of lashing the camera legs to the bough, the female Eagle dashed in and sat on the same bough, almost within reach of my hand, then, realizing my presence, she flew off with a scream. The tree was very heavily foliated, and in consequence it was very dark, and it is possible that she had not seen me, her attention being taken up with the others below me on the ground.

I tried here the automatic electric camera carefully hidden with cistus bushes on the top of a sand-dune,

and baited with a rabbit. On the first attempt the rabbit was carried off bodily, the string which connected it with the camera being snapped without releasing the shutter. As no footprint showed in the smooth surface of the sand it was evident that some powerful bird had swooped down and carried it off without alighting. At the second attempt, after procuring another rabbit, the shutter duly went off, and by the tracks left in the sand it was plain that a Kite or Kites had been there. Unfortunately, the plate, from which I expected an interesting photograph, was badly fogged from being left so long in the brilliant sun, only protected by the fabric of the focal-plane shutter.

Many Peregrines were flying about the forests, and were apparently resting or sitting in empty nests, for from one nest from which we disturbed a Peregrine we afterwards took four eggs of the Raven.

Kestrels also use the old nests of the Kite in which to lay their own eggs. Barn Owls and Jackdaws nest in the old cork-trees, while the quaint Little Owls use the Woodpeckers' holes in the same trees, and also the holes in the gnarled and twisted olive-trees.

Bee-eaters, Hoopoes, Rollers, and Golden Orioles also abound, and add to the interest of the scene by their brilliant plumage; and a few Southern



NEST OF ORPHEAN WARBLE (SYLVIA ORPHEA)

Grey Shrikes and many Woodchat Shrikes sit on the bushes and smaller trees on the watch for passing beetles. This Grey Shrike is not the northern form, *Lanius excubitor*, but *Lanius meridionalis*, which has the breast vinous coloured; the former is not found anywhere in Spain.

In the orange orchards nearer the river we found many Goldfinches' nests, and several nests of Woodchat Shrike.

Another nest of the Woodchat, with six eggs, was in a tangled bush at the height of about seven feet from the ground. The only nest of *Lanius meridionalis*, the Southern Grey Shrike, was also in a very thick bush, but lower down, perhaps five feet from the ground.

In the orange-trees was a nest of the Orphean Warbler, while Great Tits, called by the Spanish boys *Santa Cruz* (Holy Cross), from the black throat and breast stripe forming a rude sort of cross, were very abundant, nesting in similar holes and crannies to those usually chosen by these birds at home.

Nightingales in Spain habitually nest much higher up than is usual in England. In a Jerez garden I saw two nests in bamboos some four feet from the ground. In the same garden was a nest of the Western form of the Olivaceous Warbler (*Hypolais opaca*), containing four eggs. This was at a

considerable height—quite ten feet—while the nest of a Blackcap was thirty feet up a tree. This looks as if these birds had been driven to nest in higher situations on account of some danger likely to be met with in more lowly sites. The abundance of large snakes and lizards, both with very carnivorous tastes, is no doubt a factor to be reckoned with by small birds in making their domestic arrangements. As these huge lizards think nothing of swallowing whole a half-grown rabbit (*vide* Chapman's *Wild Spain*), a brood of young birds would not be at all safe on or near the ground.

While we were in the desolate marismas, far removed from any of the luxuries of life, my friend fell ill. There was no doctor anywhere available, and I had to turn doctor for the occasion. As he was in great pain, with internal inflammation, hot flannels seemed to be desirable; and failing anything else more suitable, a flannel shirt was wrung out of boiling water, and in this the patient was packed, while hot-water bottles were improvised out of wine-bottles wrapped up in a focusing-cloth. A day or two of this treatment proved very beneficial, but then the difficulty arose about feeding him. Luckily, our stores contained one tin of cocoa, and as we could get no meat, except by shooting for the pot, Benitez, the Spanish keeper, who acted as our factotum and handy man, was dispatched to shoot some Turtle



NEST OF WESTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER (*HYPOLAIS OPACA*)

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Doves and Woodpigeons, and with these some capital strong soup was made. A few days later the patient was about again, though somewhat shaky on his legs.

On these expeditions it does not pay to be ill. As long as one is well, the rough, open-air life and the constant occupation are most enjoyable; but during sickness it is a very different affair. I make a point of carrying a few remedies, but have very seldom had occasion to use them myself. Quinine, for example, is a necessity; some arnica, or Elliman's embrocation, for strains or muscular fatigue, is also often wanted, and a few homoeopathic medicines take up little room and are decidedly useful—these and a bottle of chlorodyne are always included in my luggage wherever I go; and last, but not least important, a tin of Keating's insect powder.

Luckily, I am not a *persona grata* with insect pests, and I can often sleep unmolested while my companions are horribly tormented. But when in doubt about sleeping-quarters I always make a point of using my sleeping-bag, without which no traveller is perfectly equipped. Mosquitoes, however, are not very discriminating; and any stranger, be he dry or juicy, is bound to suffer more than a native. A mosquito-net is therefore a necessity, for a disturbed night, and especially a succession of disturbed nights, renders it impossible to be in fit

condition for work during the day. In the southern countries of Europe mosquitoes as a rule only trouble one at night, and one can generally depend upon being unmolested during the day. There are exceptions, however. On the Danube Delta, for example, the mosquitoes are always hungry, and give one no peace by day or night. A green gauze bag, big enough to go over the hat and long enough to tuck under the coat collar, is a great defence for the face; and this, with gloves for the hands, will give sufficient protection.

In these Spanish marismas you need no precautions against mosquitoes until April; they then begin to be troublesome. During May the interior of a *choza*, or even the airy rooms of the ancient shooting-boxes of the old Spanish nobility, are veritable infernos, and without the protection of mosquito-curtains a stranger would be almost eaten alive. During the later summer months they must equal the winged hordes of the Dobrudscha region, where, to live at all, the people are obliged to have bonfires of dried reeds in the streets, which emit stifling volumes of smoke, and in the towns it is almost impossible to see the light from the feeble street-lamps for the hosts of mosquitoes that circle around them.

One hears about the campaign against mosquitoes in tropical countries in the attempt to fight the



MOORISH DOORWAY, ALCAZAR, SEVILLE

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yellow fever and similar tropical diseases, but to disinfect a district like the marismas of Southern Spain, or the impenetrable swamps and morasses of the Danube, seems to me to be an utterly impossible task, and beyond even the powers of science to effect.

No visit to Andalusia is complete without a stop at Seville, and we spent a few days at this beautiful town, in order to see the old Moorish palace of Alcazar, and the Cathedral, a typical example of Spanish architecture.

Any attempt, however, at describing the beauties of Seville is beyond the scope of a book which only professes to deal with the birds of Wild Europe.

III

THE JOURNEY OUT TO BOSNIA AND MONTENEGRO

EARLY in April 1906, I found myself in Serajevo, a place the very existence of which, let alone its whereabouts, I had been profoundly ignorant a few weeks before. It is possible that some of my readers will sympathize with this ignorance, for, though the capital of Bosnia, it is not a place which makes much stir in the world, and it would be easy to go through life and never hear of it or see any reference to it.

The railway journey from Vienna and Budapest had been through a desolate, snow-covered country, and on arrival early in the morning at my destination the snow was still falling heavily, and the mountains which encircle the town gleamed white through the morning mist as a rickety omnibus bumped along the stone-cobbled streets and deposited me at the door of the Hôtel de l'Europe.

The object of my visit was to interview the naturalists at the National Museum, to whom I had introductions, in order to glean some information as

to the nesting-places of the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*). I had come out with the intention of finding, and photographing if possible, this Pelican, and also the other European Pelican, *P. onocrotalus*, as well as the rare and beautiful Great White Heron (*Ardea alba*).

I suppose that, comparatively speaking, few of those who see the Pelicans solemnly sitting round their small pond in the gardens of the Zoological Society have any idea that these great birds, so curious in their structure and appearance, are still inhabitants of Europe in this twentieth century. We think of them almost instinctively as the 'Pelican of the wilderness,' and associate with them the idea of vast African lakes and the fever-laden banks of remote tropical rivers, where the crocodiles crawl among the mangrove stems, and stretch their scaly bodies along the steaming mud-banks.

Needless to say, they are only to be found in the most out-of-the-way parts of Wild Europe, far from the haunts of man, and very far from any remnants of civilization. This I was, of course, prepared for, but the reality far exceeded my anticipations; and before I succeeded in photographing these birds at home I was fated to spend a whole month in the search, my travels being extended considerably farther than I had expected.

Yet this can hardly be considered a disadvantage.

Travelling in itself is pleasant enough; travelling for any specified object adds enormously to the interest. And the search after rare birds is a most fascinating pursuit, inasmuch as it leads one of necessity into the most out-of-the-way and therefore the most interesting places, where the scenery is of the finest, and where the people, if there are any at all, are genuine representatives of their country, unspoilt by the life of cities and by contact with the ubiquitous tourist. The very difficulty of the pursuit adds to the enjoyment of success; and if there is a suspicion of danger attached to the work it gives fresh zest to the whole.

At Serajevo one feels on the threshold of Eastern Europe, and of another world; a world of strange costumes and baggy breeches, and of Oriental ways and customs, far removed from the frock-coated, top-hatted world of the rest of Europe. And yet we are still only in Austria—Austria, that is, to all intents and purposes. For the Treaty of Berlin, which played the game of General Post thirty years ago in this part of Europe, gave the administration of Bosnia, Dalmatia, and Herzegovina into the care of Austria, and this country now practically governs them as if they were her own. She has certainly spent much money on railways and more on fortifications, and her soldiers (in blue tights) are everywhere present. There are banks, public buildings, and a



SPALATO ORANGE-BOATS

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museum at Serajevo, and one hears much of the prosperity of the country under Austrian rule. It may be so, but whether the prosperity is for the Austrian officials or for the inhabitants of the country I know not. All I can say is, that never in my life have I seen such depressed-looking, hopeless, poverty-stricken people as I saw coming into the town on market-day, driving sheep not much bigger than terriers and ponies the size of a Newfoundland dog. Clad in rags and tatters, and bearing in front a leather band like a shelf—which looks as if originally intended to carry a battery of weapons¹—they slouch along, with their feet wrapped up in shapeless bundles of rags, exactly like the bears in the Zoo. Very different is their bearing from that of the free and independent Montenegrins, or the warlike Albanians.

The mountains in the immediate neighbourhood of the town are still inhabited by bears and wolves; and I heard that not only the great Eagle Owl (*Bubo maximus*), but also the rare Ural Owl (*Syrnium uralensis*) is to be found there. The abundance of Jackdaws and Hooded Crows in the streets is very noticeable, and I found them equally numerous everywhere throughout the Balkans. At first it

¹ Carrying arms is now prohibited, and the custom has been stamped out after some hundreds have been hung *for carrying alone*, but they still cling to the now useless belt.

seemed strange to find these birds—which I had always been accustomed to regard as northern birds—down here so far south, and to see how tame and familiar they are compared with the wariness and caution they display in England. Here in the streets, and on a piece of waste ground outside the town used as a rubbish heap, it was quite easy to walk within a few yards of them. On this same waste ground were many Wheatears and flocks of Tree Sparrows, while along the river-banks were White and Yellow Wagtails and Sandpipers. A few Sandmartins were skimming over the river on April 4.

The museum has some good birds and mammals, a group of Brown Bears killed in the mountains about an hour's journey from the town being excellent. But the rooms are too small for large groups to be displayed to advantage.

The railway from Serajevo to Gravosa, on the Adriatic, is a fine bit of engineering, the line winding round the mountains in zigzag curves. Through Herzegovina especially the scenery is very impressive. From the carriage window one sees a constant succession of pictures of snow-clad mountains, waterfalls, and rocky rivers. Occasionally an Eagle may be seen suspended over the valleys, and once a huge nest was seen in a small tree, not ten feet from the ground, half-way up a steep hill-

help. One never knows, however, what is to befall one; and I was destined to see a good deal of Albania and the Albanians before I had finished my quest.

My first landing on Montenegrin soil was a very weird experience. Owing to a strong sirocco wind, the steamer was unable to put into Dulcigno itself, but was obliged to use an alternative landing-place behind the hills which encircle the town, called Val de Noche, always used when this particular wind prevails. Here I was landed, the only passenger, sitting on a tub in a large boat full of cargo. On arrival at the pebbly beach at the end of the inlet, where one solitary building was the only sign of human habitation, I was received by a band of half-naked savages, to all appearance, capering in and out of the surf preparing to land the cargo. One of these, as black as any negro, landed me on his back. On the steamer I had just left nobody had thought it necessary to tell me that this was not Dulcigno itself, so that I found myself alone with these men unable to speak a single word which they could understand or to understand any word of theirs, and without the faintest notion where Dulcigno was situated, how far it was, or how to reach it. Above all, I did not know then, as I found out later, that a stranger in Montenegro, more especially an Englishman, is perfectly safe, that theft and robbery or brigandage is absolutely

unknown, and that the huge revolvers worn universally are only used in avenging private vendettas, in their feuds with their ancient enemies the Albanians, and in saluting parting friends. All this I had to find out, and I must say that this first experience was by no means pleasant. However, by signs I managed to engage two men and a couple of horses to convey my baggage to the town. As the heavily laden horses toiled uphill through the olive-woods my men, two of the wildest-looking rascals I had ever beheld, beguiled the way with song and laughter, while I walked with them in perfect ignorance of what was going to happen. After an hour's journey over narrow, rocky mountain-paths we reached a small town of grey stone houses built irregularly round the small bay. Then, after descending a narrow, stony road or lane, my conductors halted in front of a building which proved to be the custom-house. The official, a burly man in the national costume of crimson gold-edged jacket, baggy blue breeches, and top-boots, with the inevitable revolver stuck in a scarlet sash, passed all my things without the slightest bother, and I was free to proceed. The only inn appeared to be a small building pleasantly situated on the beach, and here I engaged a room—at least I got my things carried up there—and obtained something to eat and drink; but as for

making any arrangement about terms, that was far beyond my powers. However, as soon as I had settled down and finished my repast, I went forth to try to find the house of one of the chief men in the town, to whom the Austrian consul at Antivari had given me an introduction. He also was dressed in the national costume, and a handsome old fellow he looked. Tall, as are all the Montenegrins, with an imposing, aristocratic presence, his beetling brows and strong, hooked nose gave him the appearance of some fierce bird of prey. He accorded me a most courteous reception, while I explained, as well as I could, my reasons for visiting his country. Unfortunately, he could speak very little French, and of course no English, but promised to do what he could to assist me. This promise was very soon redeemed, for shortly after my return to 'mine inn' he brought to my room a law student who spoke most excellent French: indeed, I soon found that he knew and spoke fluently nearly every European language except English and Spanish.

It is quite a common thing in these countries of Eastern Europe to find, not only among the educated classes, but among the ordinary working population, people who speak fluently two or three languages besides their own. This is not a question of education at all, for the majority have never had any, but they have acquired from their



OLD VENETIAN CASTLE, DULCIGNO

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infancy, instead of one language, the two or three which have happened to be generally used around them. Italian, for instance, is the language of the Adriatic generally, the sailors' language, from the small coasting craft, which make such a picturesque feature in all the small ports on both shores of the Adriatic, to the large steamers of the Austrian-Lloyd, and the Ungaro-Croatia, on board of which Italian is the official language. Shipping, of course, means trade; and in consequence Italian is the most universally spoken language all down the coast, and for some considerable distance inland. In fact, it is so indispensable that, previous to my second visit to these parts, I took some lessons in Italian, and in consequence enjoyed my travelling much more, was considerably more independent, and saved a great deal of expense. French is also useful, but only in the towns, among the officials, the consuls, and the higher classes. Among the fishermen, boatmen, and the working people whom I have to engage as guides and carriers, French is quite useless, as is English. People who say that they can travel all over the world with English should visit some of the places in these countries, and they would find themselves very much at sea if they knew no other language. On all the regular routes, and in towns visited by tourists, English serves well enough all over the world. On the

steamer lines in the Adriatic, for example, the captains, and generally several of the officers, speak English. In fact, unless they can speak English, French, and German, as well as Italian, there is no chance of their obtaining a captain's certificate—this being one of the rules of the Austrian-Lloyd Company. But once off the steamer English is perfectly useless until Corfu is reached. This, of course, belonged to England for many years until restored to Greece some thirty years ago. And in some of the small south Albanian ports opposite Corfu, where English sportsmen go regularly for Woodcock and Wild Boar shooting, doubtless some English might be understood by the natives.

German is the official language from Trieste to Cattaro, the southernmost port of Dalmatia being that country under the sway of Austria. Indeed, there is great rivalry between Austria and Italy, not only in language, but in politics and trade. Each country is doing all it can to push its own trade, its own influence, and its own language to the front. Both countries, and, in a lesser degree, Greece also, are undoubtedly looking forward to the time when the Turk shall be pushed back still farther south, and are preparing by all the means in their power to step into the vacant territory.

Montenegro, with its own ambitions of a Servian kingdom, has so far preserved its independence, but



THE QUAY, SEBENICO, DALMATIA



SPALATO

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fears and hates Austria almost as much as it does its hereditary enemies the Turk and the Albanian ; but in Albania, the most northern Turkish possession, Italy and Austria are openly vying with each other in extending their sphere of influence.

In Albanian towns there are Italian and Austrian schools which almost pay children to come and be educated. As far as language goes, however, Austria is at an immense disadvantage, for German taught in the schools can never hope to compete with Italian picked up spontaneously by the people in their daily lives.

The Jews in these countries were originally of Spanish extraction, so that it is not at all unusual to find Spanish spoken.

In Montenegro the people are Serbs, and Servian is the national language. In Albania the officials are Turks, so that two quite distinct languages are spoken. Farther south Greek begins to be in much use. So that it is not very surprising to find amid all these complexities of race and language a polyglot people who speak fluently from three to seven or eight different tongues.

IV

THE QUEST OF THE PELICAN : MONTENEGRO

WITH the assistance of the law student before referred to, M. Saverias Djouraschkovitch, I began to make preparations for my search. The first thing was to find somebody who knew the country and the best localities for birds, and I presently engaged a certain Nikola, who had been recommended to me as a great chasseur, for four crowns a day (Austrian currency seems to be in general use here).

On the 10th of April I began operations by a visit to the mouth of a river about twenty miles off, where I was told Pelicans were generally to be seen.

A pack-horse was engaged to carry cameras and my sleeping-bag and rugs, while Nikola, Djouraschkovitch, and I walked. Nikola carried my small collecting gun, of which he had taken possession as a matter of course, and a fine Hobby having been seen in a tree soon after we had passed the town, I sent him after it to see what he could do. After missing it twice he came back without the bird. As a chasseur Nikola was certainly a failure, for he was a bad shot both with my gun and his own, a



PACK-HORSES



MONTENEGRIN FERRY

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dilapidated double muzzle-loader fastened together with string and wire, with a bit of stick for a ramrod. My gun, a double .410, was a mistake. While too small for very large birds, it shot so close that it was very difficult to hit a small bird, and when it did, the bird was generally knocked to bits and spoilt as a specimen. I certainly made some good and long shots with it at the larger Herons and Hawks, but I should not like to say how many were missed.

Goldfinches and many other small birds were very numerous in the fields on each side of our road, and on the banks of a small, navigable river, which we crossed in a very primitive ferryboat wound up by a rope, were many Sandpipers (*Totanus hypoleucus*). Magpies flew constantly over the fields and perched on the roadside trees, in which were many half-finished nests. Hooded Crows were also nesting, but the most advanced nest at this date only contained one egg. As we neared our destination birds began to be more plentiful, many Godwits feeding in the swampy places, while Marsh Harriers flew over the plains; and once we saw a very light-coloured Harrier, either *Cyaneus* or *Pallidus*, sweeping to and fro over a small marsh.

A pair of Sea Eagles then flew past us, and presently I saw three large, heavily-built birds flying low down, with their heads drawn back and large

beaks projecting in front. They were unmistakably Pelicans, the first I had ever seen in a wild state. It seemed a good omen for this first day of actual search, and my hopes began to rise. Seeing birds, however, is one thing, and photographing them is something very different. I knew this well enough before from many a bitter experience, and the present case was to prove no exception to the rule.

On arrival at a small village mostly inhabited by Albanians we had something to eat, while a boat was got ready with three men, as the current is of exceptional strength. Two of these men were armed with magazine rifles, for we were now on the frontier, where there is a constant state of hostility, and bloodshed is a common occurrence. The revolver is a part of the national costume in Montenegro, and is always worn even in the towns, but along the frontier the rifle is also almost universally carried. These are Mausers provided by Russia, and every able-bodied Montenegrin has one, and is expected to turn out in case of need. They are but a small and poor nation, but are always under arms. I was told that even the unmarried girls over a certain age have rifles served out to them, and are trained in their use.

At the mouth of the river we saw several Pelicans



PELICANS SWIMMING



PELICANS (PELECANUS CRISPUS)

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busy fishing in the sea, while others were resting on the sand digesting their last meal of fish. They were exceedingly shy, however, and it was impossible to approach within about 400 yards, and at a quarter of that range even a Pelican is impossible to photograph with the telephoto lens, while with an ordinary lens it would be nearly invisible. I hardly knew where to look for nests, some information I had received leading me to suppose that they nested among reeds, while these people here assured me they nested on the sand at the water's edge. But as we were divided in the search over a sandy tract with pools of water, bushes, and swamps, suddenly three men armed with magazine carbines and Martini rifles were seen coming towards us. Their attitude did not appear to be friendly, and Djouraschkovitch seemed inclined to avoid them; but as we were in full sight, and meeting them was perfectly inevitable, I thought it best to put on a bold face and see what they wanted. It seemed that we were on a disputed tract of land, claimed by both Montenegro and Albania, in consequence of the altered course of the river, which had shifted its bed—as rivers occasionally do—some years previously. As I was accompanied by Montenegrins, these Albanians, seeing my camera, thought we were surveying, or taking some steps towards seizing or fortifying the place,

and they told us very plainly, through Djouraschkovitch, who acted as interpreter, to go. During the discussion one of them, an evil-looking ruffian, the most unprepossessing of the three, all of whom looked very murderous blackguards, sat down and deliberately pointed his loaded rifle at my head at a distance of about six yards. I have often wondered since what his intention was; I don't know whether he meant to shoot, or whether, perhaps, he thought to frighten me. At any rate I took it as a joke, and, turning my camera at him, pretended to take his photograph. I wish I had done so in reality, it would have been an interesting photograph to have, but, unfortunately, I had no plate ready at the time for instant action.

However, we had to go, there was no help for it; and after seeing the Pelicans of which I was in search, further pursuit of them had to be abandoned, at all events in this particular locality, and we returned the next day to the town.

My quarters in the little inn proved to be very comfortable, and the cooking, though plain and simple, was good. The mutton from the small sheep of the country, fed on the salt marshes near the sea, was excellent, and the wine good and cheap. It being Lent, my men absolutely refused to touch meat or wine, and ate only bread and vegetables enough to keep themselves alive. The



STREET SCENE, DULIGNO

religion here is that of the Greek Church, and fasting is rigorously carried out. The consequence is that towards the end of Lent the men are quite unfit for a good day's work.

On Easter Day they make calls on all their friends and acquaintances, stopping a few minutes to drink a glass of wine, and to take away one or two Easter eggs, dyed red, in the pocket. With these eggs they play a game resembling that engaged in by English boys with chestnuts, tapping one egg against the other until the weaker one is cracked; and the same custom is found in Albania, as it is among the boys in Cumberland to-day. I was invited by Djouraschkovitch to his home on purpose to see the proceedings. There was a constant succession of arrivals, each of whom was served with a glass of wine and a plate of hard-boiled eggs stained in colours, mostly red. The wine, as a rule, was only sipped, and the greater part left. A snuffy little priest, however, had evidently done more than sip, or else he had had a larger round of acquaintances to visit, for he was decidedly jovial, as he saluted everybody present with three kisses on the cheek. I tried to get off with one, but there was no escape. I met him again later in the day at another house, but, luckily, he remembered having saluted me before, and contented himself with a handshake, much to my relief.

Dulcigno is, I think, the most, or at all events one of the most, picturesque places I have ever seen. At one end of the small bay, and dominating the harbour, stands the old Venetian castle, or its ruins, one of the many memorials along this Adriatic coast of the long-vanished supremacy of Venice. This is now a curious collection of ruined buildings, and small houses made out of their materials, intersected by narrow, tortuous passages and rocky stairways, and crowned at the highest part by a ruined church. It is a perfect human warren; even the roofless, windowless cellars sheltering crowds of half-naked people, whose eyes glare at you out of the darkness of their noisome abodes like those of wild and unclean animals, while their muttered curses at the intruder follow him as he stumbles and slips along the rock-hewn paths. Myriads of Jackdaws nest in the crevices of the walls, and also in the rocks.

At the other extremity is the modest villa of the Prince of Montenegro, perched on the top of a low cliff, and surrounded by trees. Between the two is the beach, the road along which forms the chief promenade of the inhabitants, and two or three buildings, which include the Turkish Consulate and the small inn in which I stayed, l'Albergo Athanase. But the principal attraction to me was the bazaar, the main street, where the shops were collected together. On bazaar day, or market day,



MELITZA—A MONTENEGRIN GIRL



DULCIGNO

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the people poured in from all the country round until the narrow street was packed full of men and women in the most extraordinary variety of costumes I had ever seen. It was just like stepping backward into the Middle Ages, only instead of carrying sword and spear the men are armed with huge revolvers and rifles. One man had in his waistcloth a very handsome silver-handled sword. I was told it had been presented by the Russian Government for having cut off a Turk's head in the late war. He had evidently lost an eye over the job, but looked immensely proud of himself.

The Montenegrin costume is handsome enough, but the Albanians are more picturesque and fantastic in their attire. It would be a great chance for a figure artist in search of new subjects to come and stop here for two or three or six months. He would get abundance of new material in the way of costume, colour, and a type of humanity quite fresh to the picture galleries overcrowded with Italian and Egyptian subjects.

Albanian mountaineers, with black jackets tufted heavily with black worsted, their national white fez with headcloth, and thick, white felt trousers cut tight, with fantastic stripes of broad, black braid down the outside and inside of each leg; venerable Turks, Bosniacs, negroes, Turkish women in shapeless camel-hair cloaks with enormous hoods,

their faces entirely covered with semi-transparent veils, hideously striped with grotesque daubs of black and yellow; and rough, shaggy ponies loaded with firewood,—all jostle one another in the narrow street, and collect in crowds round the open shops, where the various artisans ply their handicraft, squatting cross-legged on the floor.

Here there is a blind minstrel surrounded by a listening crowd as he plays on the *guzla*, or one-stringed guitar, and sings ballads about the brave deeds of his countrymen against the hated Turk. It is a melancholious and monotonous instrument, somewhat akin to the African tom-tom, but the subject of his verses fills with enthusiasm the hearts of his hearers, and the coins collect in his cap placed beside him on the ground.

Farther on a group of women squat cross-legged on the ground, with various goods for sale placed in front of them. They are Mohammedans, and are carefully muffled up to the eyes in flowing white draperies. At my approach, intent on photographing the picturesque and curious group, they bend forwards until their heads almost touch the ground, so that I shall see as little as possible; women standing outside the shops looking for bargains take refuge in the dark interiors as soon as they see me; while the Turkish ladies, on seeing a stranger approach, sidle along with their faces turned towards



STREET SCENE, DULCIGNO

the wall and away from the unbeliever. This is perhaps wise on their part, for anything more hideous and ghastly—not to say devilish—than their appearance it is impossible to imagine. I think it was Mark Twain who said that he could never understand why Mohammedan women should cover their faces so carefully until one day he saw one unveiled by chance, then he understood. If it was not Mark Twain who made this remark it ought to have been, for it is quite characteristic of him. However that may be, Turkish children are very often remarkably pretty, with oval faces, and large, lustrous eyes heavily fringed with long eyelashes. But their appearance is generally spoiled by the fact that their hair is stained a fiery red with lime, and their fingers stained yellow with henna.

The Montenegrin women do not cover their faces. They wear the same small, red, gold and black forage cap as the men, a plain blue skirt, and a long white or blue sleeveless jacket. The younger women often have their black hair hanging down in two tails, which in the older ones are generally wound round the forehead like a coronet, and a very effective fashion it is, and one which suits well their strong and often noble-looking faces. They are a fine people, both men and women.

The trade seems to be chiefly in the hands of Turks, and there are at least three or four mosques

in the place.¹ One of them is just opposite my window, and I can hear the muezzin call the faithful to prayers as I lie in bed in the morning. The people who flock into the town on bazaar days are chiefly Albanians, who appear to occupy and cultivate much of the land around. It speaks volumes for the Montenegrin rule that these people, naturally so antagonistic, can mingle together as harmoniously as they do on Montenegrin soil. It is also curious that the Albanians appear to thrive, while poverty drives the Montenegrins to emigrate to the United States at the rate, I was told, of 500 a week, there to work in the mines of California.

I have seen many parties of these poor people embarking, with their small bundles of possessions, bravely enough, with songs and fusillades of revolver shots. I have also been behind the scenes, as it were, and have accompanied them in their march over the hills, through the olive-woods, which they were seeing for the last time. I have watched these stalwart men singing with the tears running down their faces, and sobbing like children when the moment of parting arrived. On these occasions half the population of the town turns out to give them a good send-off, and the consumption of cartridges for their revolver salutes is considerable.

¹ Dulcigno was originally a Turkish port, and was only captured by Montenegro about thirty years ago.



TURKISH MOSQUE AND RUINED CASTLE, DULCIGNO

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The first search for a nesting-place of Pelicans having been frustrated, another locality was visited, of which I had received information in Serajevo. This was a lake not far from the town, but difficult of access, from the extraordinary strong current, against which it was almost impossible to force the rude, dug-out canoe we had borrowed for the occasion. At last, after great exertion, we succeeded in navigating the narrow but impetuous stream, and found ourselves in a small lake with a thick growth of tall reeds all round, leaving an open space in the middle. There were immense numbers of Coots and White-eyed Ducks. Purple Herons were carrying sticks and evidently beginning their nesting arrangements in the reeds, but all our search failed to find any sign of Pelicans or their nests. Marsh Harriers were numerous, and observing one sitting on what appeared from a distance to be a nest, we rowed towards it. The supposed nest, however, was only a pile of reeds; but to make sure, I got out of the boat and waded into the reed-bed to make a more thorough search. Not many yards from where the Harrier had been first seen a curious-looking object was observed on the surface of the water. As I approached nearer this looked like a dead bird; still nearer it was seen to be a Little Bittern, but alive, and crouching motionless in a very unbirdlike attitude. I remembered

having read that this bird had sometimes allowed itself to be caught in the hand, and so I approached through the deep water, nearly up to my waist, very slowly and cautiously until within arm's length. Then, by a quick movement, I succeeded in grasping it by the neck. In truth I was almost as much astonished as the bird at such a curious capture, perhaps more so, for it showed neither surprise nor fear, but sat on my knee, after returning to the boat, quite contentedly, without making the least attempt to escape.

A few days after this second unsuccessful search I received a letter from an English lady I had met on the steamer before arriving at Dulcigno, to say that she had mentioned my quest after Pelicans to the Austrian Consul at Durazzo in Albania. He had told her that Pelicans were numerous there, close to the town—in fact, that they were visible from his windows with the aid of a glass, and that if I liked to come he would be very glad to put me up and assist me to the best of his ability.

This offer, so unexpected, coming from a complete stranger, was as welcome as it was unlooked for. In fact, it relieved me of so much doubt as to what I should do next that I wrote at once to say that I should come as soon as I possibly could. I packed up all my belongings, lost no time in boarding the next steamer bound for the Albanian ports, and started off to see my unknown friend.



LITTLE BITTERN (*ARDEOLA MINCULA*)

V

THE QUEST OF THE PELICAN : ALBANIA

THE traveller arriving at a Turkish port must be prepared for unpleasantness. Unable to speak the language, I was not long in finding out the difference between the manners of Montenegrin and Turkish customs officials, and very soon found myself in difficulties. The whole of my luggage was opened and subjected to a vigorous search, and all my goods and chattels were quickly scattered over the floor in inextricable confusion, while the Turkish officials were busy confiscating my gun and all the cartridges. Then they came on several gross of photographic dry-plates, and proceeded to commence opening them to see what they contained. The previous proceedings had sufficiently exasperated me, but this was more than I could stand. How I managed to stop them I hardly know to this day; but by very vigorous expostulations I did manage to stay proceedings, and induced one of the bystanders—for by this time a considerable crowd had collected—to take my card to the Consul and request him to come to my assistance.

Judge of my relief when, a very few minutes afterwards, a cheery voice shouted out from the doorway, and in perfect English too, 'Hullo, Mr. Lodge! what can I do for you?' The obvious reply was to beg him to get me out of this bother as soon as possible; and in 'less than no time' my things were bundled back into the portmanteaux and boxes, and I was on my way to the Consulate with my new friend. The gun and cartridges had to be left for the time being, but they were restored two or three days later.

This was my first introduction to Baron B——, the Austrian Consul, the best sportsman and most jovial companion I ever had the good luck to meet anywhere. A keen naturalist, good shot, and full of enthusiasm for whatever he undertook, I could not possibly have met a man better qualified to help me in my difficult search; for besides his power as Consul, he spoke fluently all the languages and dialects of the country—Servian, Turkish, Italian, and Albanian, besides German, Magyar, French, and English.

On arrival at the Consulate he lost no time in fulfilling his promise to show me Pelicans from his windows. Sure enough, with a prism binocular, I could see on the lagoon beyond the town seven or eight Pelicans resting on a small island, and after lunch we walked out to see them nearer.

Durazzo lagoon is a large sheet of shallow, brackish water stretching behind the town, and divided from the sea at each end by a narrow strip of sand. It is surrounded by marshy ground, behind which lie forests, and behind them, on the landward side, high mountains, on which the snows lie unmelted until May. There are a few fish, but apparently not enough to attract the attention of many fishermen; and as there are many low islands covered with samphire and other plants, and an extensive reed-bed at one end, it is an ideal place for ducks and all kinds of wading and water birds. Plenty of feeding ground, shallow water, small fish, quietness, and cover for resting in during the day—what more could water-fowl desire? and in consequence they were there in immense numbers. And, above all, there were the Pelicans, which my host believed to nest on the lagoon.

It was quickly decided to start work on the very next day, and I turned in to bed that night with great hopes for the morrow, confident that success could not be far off with such efficient assistance.

Next morning we set off on horseback, having sent on previously Marco, the kavass, and another man, with the camera and belongings, with orders to wait for us at a certain point which seemed to be the best place at which to hide up while B—— tried to drive the birds round to me.

This first day was conclusive proof to me of the sort of man I had come across ; for no sooner had we finished making a rude hiding-place for me at the extremity of the point than he plunged gaily into the lagoon and commenced his long and arduous drive. Waist-deep in water he waded across and across, dodging behind islands, and sometimes lying flat on one of them, driving and turning them with consummate skill. But Pelicans are kittle cattle to drive, and, in spite of some hours of hard work, only once did they approach me within 1,000 yards. Then I did a long range telephotograph of two of them on a small islet about 400 yards away, knowing perfectly well all the time that I was only wasting a plate. However, I would have wasted willingly a gross of plates rather than run any risk of even appearing to lose an opportunity obtained by so much labour.

To make a long story short, and to save recording unnecessary and trivial details, we spent a fortnight searching the whole of the lagoon, wading to all the numerous islets, exploring the reed-beds, watching the lagoon from the neighbouring hills with powerful glasses, and trying every plan we could think of. It was impossible, however, to get the better of their incessant watchfulness and to approach them within a reasonable distance, or to find out where they were nesting. I even tried

the plan of hiding a camera overnight on one of the islets much favoured by them, connecting the shutter with an electric battery in such a way that the slightest touch on a silk thread stretched along the ground would release it and make the exposure, in the hope that in the early morning one of them might unsuspectingly photograph itself without knowing anything about it. But all in vain.

The worst of it was that I seriously began to doubt whether the Pelicans were in the habit of nesting there at all. I had noticed from the first that nearly all the birds were in immature plumage, and I suspected strongly that, though there probably was a breeding colony somewhere not far off, the birds here were not breeding. This supposition was confirmed by a family of fishermen and gunners who lived near the shore, who declared that they had not nested in the lagoon for many years. (These men showed us a box of dark yellow fat from a Pelican, which they declared was first-rate stuff for rheumatism.) But if we did no good with the Pelicans we had some most interesting experiences with other birds, and some of my pleasantest memories are connected with Durazzo lagoon and the surrounding country.

What delightful days were spent with gun and camera, sometimes accompanied by B——, and sometimes, when he was prevented by his Consular

duties, alone! Not the least enjoyable part of the day's programme were the glorious gallops we had on our way there. There was generally a man sent on ahead with the cameras and luncheon basket, who brought back the horses, bringing them again for us at the close of the day.

Luckily (for me) the Baron was a bachelor, and so we were free to spend the evenings in our own way, skinning and preparing the slain, and identifying doubtful species. B—— had in his library the latest edition of Naumann, with large, coloured plates. These volumes were constantly consulted, and were most useful in settling questions under discussion.

Among the ducks seen on this water were Mallard, Teal, Wigeon, Shoveler, Sheldrake, White-eyed Pochard, Gadwall, and Pintail—all these in immense numbers. There were also great flocks of Coots and Spoonbills, Grey Herons, Little Egrets, occasionally Great White Herons, Avocets, Curlew, Redshanks, Night Herons, Snipe, Ringed Plovers, Kentish Plovers, Green Plovers, and many others swimming and wading about in the shallow water and feeding on the muddy shores. The great Yellow-legged Herring Gull floated overhead, uttering his curious laugh, and numberless Marsh Harriers quartered the reeds and skimmed over the water, intent on eggs or helpless young birds, frogs, or

whatever else they could find ; and almost daily we could see a magnificent pair of Sea Eagles hunting for their daily food over marsh and hillside.

Booted Eagles, Bonelli's Eagle, and Short-toed or Snake Eagles I had seen before in Spain ; but the Sea Eagle was a new species in my experience, and as such all the more interesting.

One day we had a splendid view of both birds at close range as they quartered the reed-beds ; both male and female had perfectly white tails, and in the bright sun we could see every feather in their plumage through our glasses. It was a splendid sight, and we began to make plans for a search for their nest in a neighbouring forest, where we felt sure they must be breeding. The large flocks of Coots on the lagoon seemed to be a great attraction for them, and we often saw their attacks, and from a very considerable distance could hear the roar made by thousands of terrified Coots and Ducks rising from the water in a huge black mass. Doubtless many of the nearer birds would dive to avoid the "stoop" of the Eagle, that being the method generally ascribed to these birds in evading similar attacks, but this we were always too far away to witness. Gulls also form part of their prey. On one occasion I found the nest of a Yellow-legged Herring Gull (*Larus cachinnans*) which contained three eggs and the freshly-severed head

of the bird. A perfect cloud of feathers lay by the nest, showing where the body had been devoured. From the size and strength of the victim, which has a spread of wing of nearly five feet, the aggressor could have been nothing less than one of this pair of Eagles. The head was afterwards carried off, before I could fetch the camera to photograph the scene of the tragedy, by a Marsh Harrier; but no Harrier would have the pluck to attack a bird far heavier and stronger than itself. Another time we saw the Eagle swoop at something on the other side of a low point of land, and on rowing to the spot found a freshly-killed Black-headed Gull, which the Eagle had left where it lay on seeing our approach.

An attempt was made to photograph these Eagles, which are also very fond of carrion, by laying out on one of the islands a large dog which we bought and killed. Focused on the carcass, and carefully hidden among the herbage, the automatic electric camera was placed, the shutter of which was connected to the dog's hind leg by a fine thread. This was left out all night, but our hopes of an automatic photograph were doomed to disappointment, for neither Eagles nor Vultures came near it, so far as we could tell, and the carcass was eventually disposed of by the humble but necessary 'gentile.'

On most of the islands in the lagoon was a nest of *Larus cachinnans*, but never did we see more than one nest on each island. Here, at all events, it appeared to be solitary in its breeding habits, and too distrustful of the predatory instincts of its own kind to nest in close proximity to one another. In like manner our Great Black-backed Gull, instead of nesting in colonies, like its smaller relatives, prefers to nest, each pair by itself, generally on the summit of some rock island. The three eggs were indistinguishable from eggs of the Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*). The birds also are similar, with the exception of their bright yellow legs and feet: those of the Herring Gull being flesh coloured.

Another conspicuous though much smaller bird on these islands, as well as along the shores of the lagoon, was the lovely little Black-headed Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla atricapilla*). All the Wagtails are very graceful and very beautiful, the Grey Wagtail being perhaps the most elegant of our British Wagtails, though daintiness and elegance are the chief characteristics of the whole Wagtail family. But the strong contrast afforded by the jet black head and the bright yellow breast of this bird made it particularly striking and noticeable. They were very common, flitting about from one tall plant to another, and evidently beginning to breed; but though I searched carefully several

times I was quite unable to find a nest. Possibly they had not yet commenced to build. That was the opinion I formed at the time, and it was probably correct, for the male birds were pursuing the hens, as though they were still busy pairing.

The Common Terns (*Sterna fluviatilis*) and Lesser Terns (*Sterna minuta*) were also in possession of their breeding-ground, and evidently about to begin ; but up to nearly the end of April I could find no eggs, though they were very excited and clamorous, in the usual Tern fashion, all the time I was searching.

A Reeve (*Machetes pugnax*) was shot out of a flock on April 25, and a Wood Sandpiper (*Totanus glareola*) out of another small flock feeding in a tamarisk swamp on April 26. In this same swamp was a Magpie's nest with six eggs.

On the same day I shot four Little Stints (*Tringa minuta*) out of a large number which swept past my hiding-place. These were all on migration on their way to Northern Europe, the Little Stints bound for far-distant Siberian tundras, where they will spend the short summer in nesting operations and return southwards again in the autumn.

This coast is, of course, famous for the great numbers of Woodcock which pass up and down, to and from their more northern breeding-quarters. Southern Albania, opposite Corfu, is well known to

many English sportsmen, who resort there regularly for the excellent Woodcock shooting and also for an occasional Wild Boar.

Here, my friend B——, the Greek Consul, and one or two more, have the Woodcock shooting all to themselves, and very good sport they have sometimes. I can well remember his old Transylvanian shooting-cap, very much bashed in and broken at the crown, but with four or five rows of the small pin feathers from the wings of the Woodcock which had fallen to his gun fixed all round the hat. He had an excellent dog, a large English pointer, which was not only worth his weight in gold as a sporting dog, more especially for Woodcock, but was a most faithful friend and companion. Poor old Nero! I was very sorry to hear of his untimely death after my return home, because I knew well how much he would be missed. He was a very gentlemanly dog and exceedingly dignified in manner, while his exploits, both in love and war, were numerous and sometimes amusing. He was the biggest pointer, I think, I have ever seen; and his height and strength were of great service in forcing his way through the tangled Albanian coverts after the 'cock,' while in his frequent fights it enabled him to hold his own against great odds. I have often seen him attacked by three or four of the town dogs at once, and he always came out of the 'scrap' with

honour, though not invariably without wounds, for he was covered with the scars of old battles.

It takes a good dog to hold his own against these dogs of Albania. They are like wolves in size and fierceness, and are exceedingly dangerous, for they attack a stranger with great determination. Often I have only kept them at a distance, after much difficulty, with the butt end of a gun. Perhaps the best way with all dogs is to throw stones. Even stooping as if to pick up a stone where there are none to pick up, very often suffices to make them turn tail when everything else fails. Sometimes I have had the satisfaction of sending them to the right about, howling, with a well-directed stone; and once to my great delight I knocked the forelegs of one from under it with a half-brick, and sent it head over heels: this was in passing through a Roumanian village, where the dogs are nearly as big a nuisance as in Albania. But whatever happens you must not shoot one. I have heard of men who have been killed in retaliation for having shot a dog in self-defence. They are greatly valued by their owners, who depend upon them to guard their flocks and herds from wolves in the winter months. The most you can do in case of need is to knife them. It is at all events a sign of close quarters, and consequent necessity, and even then there would be trouble, and a big claim for



JACKDAWS (CORVUS MONEDULA)

compensation, if nothing worse. I have often felt to make sure that the handle of the big hunting-knife I always carried with my revolver was within reach and ready for use. On one occasion, while our boat was towing on the Danube, a big brute of a dog attacked the men on the bank with the tow-rope so savagely that I fired one barrel of my gun, striking the ground just in front of its nose. Even then it only retired very reluctantly and growling horribly.

Besides the birds mentioned as belonging more exclusively to the lagoon, during April we saw many Blue Tits, Great Tits, Blackbirds, Missel Thrushes, Thrushes, Magpies, Rooks, Hooded Crows, Ravens, and Jackdaws. These last inhabited in great numbers the old Castle, and also the castle ruins at Dulcigno. Many of these Jackdaws appearing to be very light about the neck, I shot a series, and found them with more or less distinct whitish edges to the grey patch on the neck. As there is a supposed sub-species in Macedonia (*Corvus monedula var. collaris*) I preserved the skins of nearly a dozen in case they approached this form. I should say that it is merely a variation, by no means constant: some having the white collar much more distinct than others. A photograph of two perched on the roof of a neighbouring house shows the white rings fairly well.

They were very tame and familiar, nesting in the house-roofs and town walls, and walking about the streets, so I tried ground baiting the roof adjacent to the Consulate with bread for a few days, leaving a box covered over with a cloth, where I intended to place the camera. Then when they came freely the camera was placed in position on the parapet, with a string, and while I sat with a book in an open doorway, old Mirto, the other kavass, kept watch, and gave me notice when they were near.

There were two kavasses attached to the Consulate: Mirto, a Turk, and Marco, an Albanian. The former generally was on duty in the house and about the town. When making calls on the governor, or at any of the other consulates, Mirto walked ahead with a big brass-handled stick, and a pair of enormous silver-mounted revolvers in his waistband, while after dusk he carried a large lantern. Marco nearly always accompanied us on our excursions farther afield, and whenever I waited hidden up to photograph Pelicans he was always lying concealed among the bushes within hail, with his magazine carbine loaded and ready in case of any trouble.

In Albania there is very little protection from law either for life or property. You have to protect yourself, and nobody moves outside the towns, and not often inside, without being armed. While in

Scutari, the secretary to the Austrian Consulate dined with me one evening at my hotel. During dinner he talked much of the safety of the town, and declared that all statements as to its insecurity and danger were greatly exaggerated. When it was time to go he suddenly disappeared, and after some time we found him trying to *borrow a revolver from the landlord to go home with*, as he had forgotten his own! He positively refused to go home without one, though he had barely 100 yards to go to reach his own house. In fact, it wasn't much more than across the road.

Bribery is rampant among the officials, from the highest to the lowest, and murder can be committed with impunity as far as arrest or trial is concerned, provided the murderer can take a sufficient back-sheesh to the authorities. There is some excuse, therefore, for the custom of the vendetta which obtains here universally. Everybody avenges his own injuries, as well as protects his own life. In the event of a murder the friends and relatives are bound in honour to exact another life for the blood that has been shed. If the actual offender can be slain, why, so much the better; but sooner than have nothing to show in revenge they will kill the nearest relative they can get at. In this way it is dangerous to be one of a large family, because if your brother should kill anybody and escape you

may have to pay the penalty. Among some of the mountain tribes it is allowable to kill anybody from the same village. Probably this is a practical equivalent to killing a relative, for the mountaineers have a tribal system something like the old Scottish clans, and all are probably related to one another. Thus an injury to one is avenged by the whole clan ; and as many of these clans number some thousand rifles, the organization is powerful enough to cause some hesitation in offending any of its members.

I heard of men who had been prisoners in their own houses for years, unable to go outside for fear of being shot at sight. One man had sworn to be avenged on the body of his father some years previously. Up to last year he had killed twenty-four people. I don't know if he is still alive, and if so what the tale of vengeance now amounts to ; but he is sure to be killed himself some day, and could hardly have survived as long as he has but for the fact of his being rich and powerful, with a large following.

Houses in the country are commonly loopholed for musketry, and provided with a watch-tower ; and several times I have found a body of armed retainers in attendance upon men over whom hung the threatened vengeance of a blood-feud. It is difficult to imagine such a state of things existing in the twentieth century.



ARMED ALBANIAN CONGREGATION AT OPEN-AIR SERVICE: EVERY MAN WITH RIFLE ON HIS BACK
[To face page 101]

It is quite common to see farmers ploughing their lands with a loaded rifle slung over the shoulder; and even on the way to church the men all go armed. No doubt there is a close time observed for the actual service, and probably for a certain distance from the church or open-air meeting; but beyond that there would be no scruple in shooting down an enemy. The majority of the people, especially in the mountains, are Roman Catholics, and very devout so far as the wearing of beads and crosses, and the observance of fasts. Beyond that there is not much difference between the Christians and the Mohammedans. The Greek Church, too, has a large following.

Their chief virtue is that of most savage and uncivilized, or half-civilized, races, hospitality. On riding up to a house the head of the family, if he is in—if not, his wife—comes out and welcomes you, and takes your rifle, which is hung up on the wall. This is a sign that you no longer need to defend yourself, and that he makes himself responsible for your safety. And as a matter of fact, you are then perfectly safe, and he will protect you at the risk of his own life. For the killing of a guest while under his protection can only be avenged with blood, although in certain cases I believe money can be accepted without loss of honour as compensation for the death of a relative. You are then ushered

into the house, where a dyed sheepskin rug is spread in the place of honour, near the fire of logs which burns in the middle of the floor. A cigarette is rolled and handed to you, while coffee is prepared and brought in on a tray in tiny cups—genuine Turkish coffee, very sweet and thick, and of course without milk. How the taste for it grows on one after a short sojourn in these countries! Unless the people are very poor, *raki* is also produced, and sour milk or cream cheese.

In the mountains I was told that a guest is passed on from one village to another, perhaps conducted by a child, with a password or a recommendation. But very few travellers have penetrated to the higher mountains. There the Albanian mountaineer, as wild and rugged, not to say as savage, as his native mountains, exercises undisputed sway, untroubled by any other authority, Turkish or otherwise. For though nominally under Turkish rule, this is of no practical value beyond the fertile lowland country and the towns. There it is confined to exacting as much money as possible and to doing as little as possible in return. The officials, from the governors and *valis* downwards, obtain their places by bribes. On payment of a certain sum down one is nominated governor, or what not. The first necessity, once he is in power, is to get back this sum, then to amass as much more

as he can as quickly as possible. Well he knows the time and opportunity is short, for soon some other official will be making a bid for the post, and he will be shelved to make room for him. Then, unless he has acquired sufficient for another post elsewhere, he will be left without employment. A nice picture truly, and a nice state of things!

This year a law was made forbidding the exportation of timber from the forests. A German merchant in the town who had or was about to purchase timber from a neighbouring forest was approached personally by the governor, who gave him to understand that in return for a present of £20 or £30, I forget which, no notice would be taken of any infringement of the law!

There are no roads, no bridges, no law, no protection, no justice for anybody.

I have myself heard a Bey offer a man £5 to swear falsely that a Christian, whom he named, was guilty of a recent murder. The offer was refused, not at all on the ground of its being a false charge, but solely because it wasn't enough. For £10 he said he would do it willingly! It is true I didn't understand what they said, as they spoke in Albanian, but B—— understood, although they thought that he didn't know Albanian, but only Turkish; and he translated their conversation to me afterwards.

Here is another case of Turkish justice. A governor of an inland town, having a grudge against a man, asked him, as a favour, to take care of some gunpowder for him. Having done so, he was denounced to the police for having explosives concealed in his house, and imprisoned. Being offered his freedom on payment of a certain sum, he indignantly refused to pay a penny for two years. Then the horrors of a Turkish prison broke down his resolution, and he paid up the sum demanded. But he didn't long enjoy his freedom, for on the second day after his release he died suddenly. The official report was to the effect that excessive joy at his release had affected his heart ; but at the time it was strongly suspected that poison was the real cause of his so sudden death.

A gentleman, whom I knew well, an Albanian landed proprietor, told me he was imprisoned once for murder. There was not the slightest foundation for the charge, and after some months he was released without having been tried. He didn't say so, but I have no doubt he effected his release by a backsheesh to the authorities.

And these Turkish governors, governor-generals, and other officials whom I have met, are to all appearance charming and most courteous gentlemen. Speaking perfect French, they talk most eloquently and plausibly on education, the reforms

they are effecting, and similar matters, until one begins to doubt the evidence of one's senses, to forget the abuses which are so palpably visible everywhere, and to think that this must be at all events an honest man, who is trying to do his duty. But they are all alike. There is really no room in such a system for an honest man ; he simply couldn't exist.

The roads are abominable. They certainly make a pretence at leaving a town, but soon become a mere track. The bridges are the rudest structures of rough, wooden planks, extremely rickety and shaky, and almost invariably with holes big enough to lame a horse if he doesn't pick his way carefully. In early spring the country in the plains is completely water-logged and saturated, the mud is terrible, and the frequent puddles nearly deep enough to engulf a horse. The roads are so bad that nobody attempts to keep to them, but it is customary to make your way over the fields on each side, keeping a careful eye on the tracks so as to follow the most lately-used passage over the streams and ditches and bad, boggy places. Through the forests a man on foot would have to wade nearly up to his middle, besides having his clothing nearly torn off his body by the terrible thorns, while on horseback it is only possible to proceed very slowly, and with great exertion to the horse, which sinks into the sticky mud about a foot at each step.

VI

AN INTERLUDE WITH EAGLES AND STORKS IN ALBANIA

THE daily sight of a pair of Sea Eagles harrying the ducks and Coots on Durazzo lagoon induced us to spare a couple of days searching for their nest in a neighbouring forest. At this time of year the roads or tracks through the forests are in a dreadful state. As we plodded along, plastered with mud from head to foot, I wondered sometimes how the horses could keep going at all. B——, however, assured me that the ground was better than he had ever known it—at this time of year, and that the last time he had passed that way for Woodcock it had been ever so much worse. There was an abundance of bird life as we proceeded through the forest. Hoopoes, Rollers, and Golden Orioles had now arrived, and the harsh scream of the Jay resounded through the forest glades as at home. Nightingales sung lustily in every direction, and the voice of the Turtle was heard in the land. Blue Tits and Great Tits appeared to be of much brighter

colours than at home. Birds of prey flew past occasionally; amongst others a male Goshawk and a young Imperial Eagle were identified as we rode along.

There was also a small bird, of sober colouring, whose note was astonishingly loud and strong, starting off suddenly like an explosion of fireworks. I had a suspicion it was the Penduline Tit, but never settled the point to my satisfaction. Either it was met with when we were travelling or else when we were intent on more important game, and couldn't attend to it.

There was such a variety of attractions that once, not looking where I was going, as I should have done, and my horse taking a short cut under an overhanging bough, I was swept ignominiously out of the saddle. I generally rode a sturdy little black horse belonging to B——, which played me many a trick, and was brimful of life and devilment. He had been ridden chiefly by Marco before my arrival, and for some time I could not overcome his habit of keeping behind B——. It was most exasperating to ride through the town at the heels of his horse, and without a whip it was almost impossible to keep him level for more than a minute or two. B——'s horse was, too, a very quick ambler, a pace much prized in these countries where so much travelling has perforce to be done at a walking pace. The

Black pretended to be unable to keep up, and I was alternately dropping astern and making spurts to catch up. All this was very annoying, so one day I unpacked an old pair of spurs that have seen service in many parts of the world and put them on, and the next time he tried his usual tricks I let him know they were for use and not for ornament. After that I always wore them, and I found he was perfectly well able to keep up with the other horse; and when he tried to carry on his games in the narrow streets of the town, as he generally did, he was soon brought to see the error of his ways. He was so full of tricks that I always called him the 'Little Black Devil,' until one day I thought of asking if he had a name, and if so, what it was. I was told 'Shaitan,' which means Satan, so that unconsciously I had given him his rightful name.

But he was an excellent horse, as sure-footed as a cat and as strong as a bullock. I have ridden him ten hours a day over terrible country, and he has been perfectly fresh and as full of mischief at the end of the day as he was at the beginning. I have often had to give a lead over a nasty ditch or bad crossing where the horses of native guides had refused to go, and have ridden up *and down* steep slopes where the guides have been obliged to dismount and walk. The grey which B—— always rode was not so strong as Shaitan but equally game, and equally

sure-footed, and the pleasantest and easiest horse to ride I have ever been on. What splendid gallops I have had on both of them! and what glorious days of wild, free life through forest and hillside and marsh we have had together!—days long to be remembered with delight, mingled with regret at the unlikelihood of ever meeting again. For B—— has gone, transferred to the United States;¹ his two horses have been sold; and poor old Nero, our constant companion, is dead.

After a long search, at last we found a large nest which B—— remembered having seen when Woodcock shooting, and sure enough it was occupied by a pair of Sea Eagles, presumably our friends of the lagoon. It was placed high up an immense silver poplar, a very favourite tree with large birds of prey, and in it we could see the head and neck, and presently nearly the whole body, of a nearly fledged young bird. This was on the 20th of April.

I photographed this young bird, but without much hopes of a very successful result, for there were many leaves of the tree in the way, which moved about in the high wind, besides which the surrounding trees made it impossible to get a clear

¹ While this book is going through the Press, comes an invitation to meet him on his way back from the States and join him in a foray among the Chamois, Trout, and Eagles of the Carpathians, with the chance of photographing a Lammergeier.

view. Some of the smaller ones we cut down, utilizing their branches in making a cover over the camera, but all the disturbance thus made rendered the return of the parent Eagles very improbable. Though we waited seven hours, terribly tormented by mosquitoes the whole time, they never came to the nest, but we could see them soaring overhead, and flying in great circles over the forest. In these evolutions they were constantly pursued by a pair of Ravens, which bullied them most persistently, making all the time a great outcry. They had themselves in all probability a nest of young somewhere in the neighbourhood, though we did not succeed in finding it. It was an extraordinary sight to see the great Eagle flying away from the Ravens, and by dodging and turning doing its best to evade pursuit, without attempting once to retaliate or to defend itself.

We slept that night in the house of the proprietor of the forest, who was away from home; but as he was a friend of B——'s, who knew the house and the servants in charge well, that made no difference, except that we had to sleep in our clothes on some couches, and to take our chance about food. However, Marco got some eggs for us, and with milk and maize bread we did pretty well.

The house, being in such a lonely place, was provided with a watch-tower at one corner. This

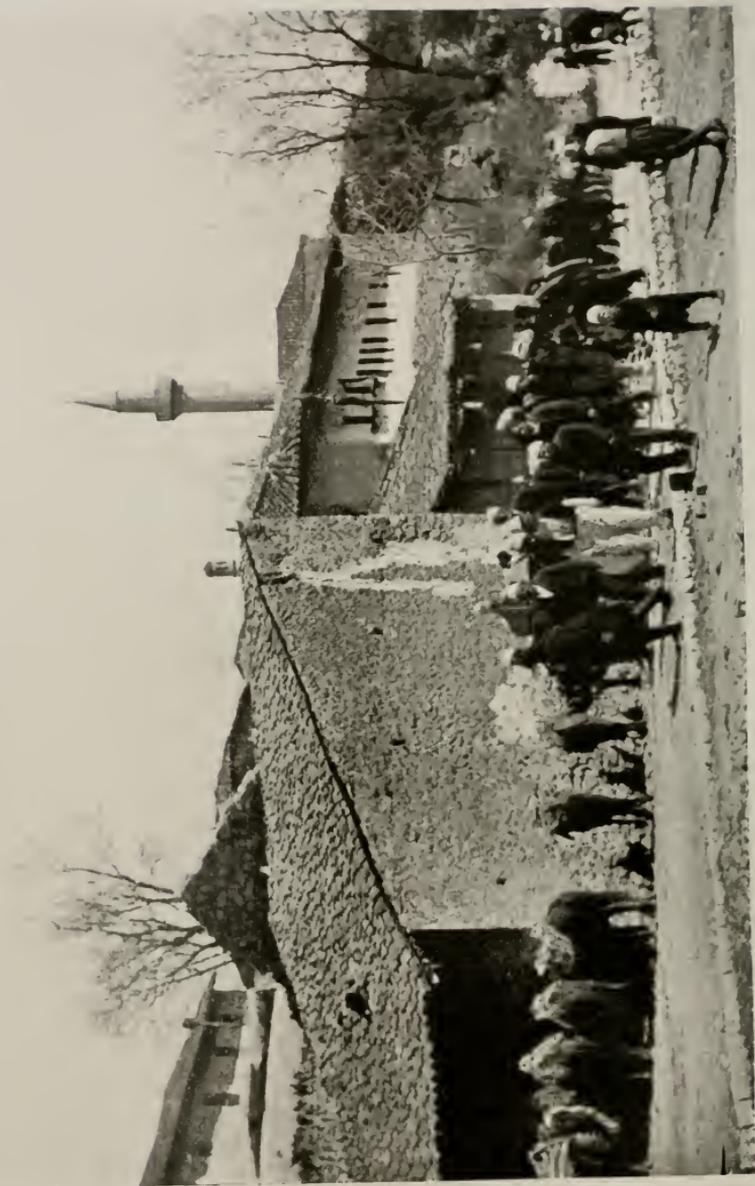
was loopholed all round so as to be defended from an attack from any quarter, while the windows were fitted with iron, bullet-proof shutters, which we were careful to close as soon as we had lighted the lamp in the evening. These precautions were not unnecessary, for B—— told me how on a former visit the robbers, who infest all these forests, had stolen all the horses during the night and had got right away with them. They were recovered, however, some days later, after an interchange of rifle-shots.

Very early in the morning we turned out and proceeded again to the nest. As we had expected, the Eagles had left to hunt for food; and about eight o'clock one of them returned to feed the young bird, which was evidently getting restless and hungry. I just succeeded in exposing the plate, which was all ready, before the Eagle disappeared into the nest, shortly afterwards leaving by the other side. But, as I feared at the time, all the photographs at this nest were useless, owing to the movement of intervening branches and leaves. The nest proved to be full of skulls and bladebones of sheep, goats, and a calf, showing that the Eaglet, which was very nearly ready to leave the nest, had been largely brought up on carrion.

On returning to the house I investigated the nest of a White Stork in the courtyard. It was placed

on the top of an old stump of a dead tree, at no height, but exceedingly rotten and shaky. Just as I reached the nest it gave a loud crack, and all the bystanders shouted out that it was going to fall. However, as I was there, and as it was the first Stork's nest I had ever been able to get at without offending the owners, I stuck to it and burrowed through the bottom of the nest with one hand, it being impossible to get at it in any other way. I could feel four eggs, which I took. They were white and smooth, and smaller than I had expected, judging from the size of the birds. I had been careful before going up to ascertain if I could take the eggs without upsetting the superstitions or prejudices of the people. There were dozens of Tree Sparrows in the outside sticks and underneath the nest of the Storks. I wished afterwards I had taken some of their eggs, but at the time I was too anxious to reach firm ground safely to bother about them. I was surprised to see that the old Stork did not desert the nest, but came back very soon afterwards and went on sitting as though nothing had happened. I concluded that I must have missed an egg, or perhaps two, and as I heard later that they had brought off a brood all right, this was probably the case, or else they laid again.

It is a most difficult thing to take Storks' eggs. They are exceedingly common, and I have seen



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hundreds of their nests in Holland, Denmark, Spain, Hungary, Roumania, Albania, and Montenegro. But as they are almost invariably on or near houses, the owners of which regard them with much affection or superstitious regard, it is nearly always a matter of impossibility to take the eggs. Once, I remember, in Jutland, a friend who was with me asked a farmer for permission to mount a ladder, only to look into a Stork's nest on the roof, and was very decidedly refused.

In Spain, it is true, I have occasionally seen nests on pine- and cork-trees in the forests, but always on large trees difficult to climb, and at the time there were young birds in the nests. In Spain I do not think the people pay much regard to them, merely considering them useful in eating locusts, mice, and even rats and snakes; but in Holland and Denmark it would be very unsafe to disturb them, and even more dangerous in Mohammedan countries, where the people look upon them with peculiar reverence.

VII

THE QUEST OF THE PELICAN : ALBANIA—*continued*

ALL this while time was flying, it was getting on towards the end of April, and in spite of all our efforts no nesting colony of Pelicans had been discovered, and no photographs done. Matters were looking serious, as I had no intention of going home without something to show.

So one evening we got out a large-scale map of the country, in the hope of finding therein some other locality where we might hope to discover them, and held a council of war. As they were not nesting round Durazzo it would be necessary, I declared, to make an expedition into the surrounding country and search there until they were found.

The result was that we decided to take Marco, with a pack-saddle loaded with a few necessaries, including a camera and photographic equipment, and ride southwards for two or three days, searching thoroughly two localities which looked likely.

Accordingly, on the 29th of April, we started off, after a good square meal, in the middle of the day,

intending to sleep at the house of a Bey who had often pressed B—— to visit him. The village where he lived was on our way, so that it just suited our purpose.

The first part of our journey lay along the shore, where the going was good enough on the firm sand, but after we left that we had the usual experiences of deep mud and extremely bad roads.

In front of some cliffs, about fifty feet in height, were numbers of Kestrels, and a pair of Peregrines, apparently nesting. Presently, after two or three hours' riding, we approached a long, straggling village, with a villainous road through it paved with irregular stones of all shapes and sizes. Turning off at the end of this we reached our friend's house, and rode through the open gateway into a large courtyard, where we were hospitably welcomed and conducted to the guest-chamber over the gateway.

The Bey is an Albanian, descended from a once powerful and noble family, whose possessions have been much reduced. His grandfather, I was told, used to ride abroad with a 'tail' of 100 mounted and armed retainers; but either in consequence of having got too big for his boots, or for some act of rebellion, his estates, or the greater part of them, were confiscated, and the present Bey is in consequence much less powerful than his ancestors.

He is not by any means a warlike individual in

appearance, but a rotund tub of a man, with a flabby face—just the man you would expect to see from his way of life. He takes no exercise, but spends the whole day smoking cigarettes and drinking *raki*. He is a Mussulman, and I heard had lately married a second wife, who is extremely jealous, and will not allow him to spend any time with his first wife. As this second wife has a separate establishment the poor man is kept busy running about, and dare not sit up late at night for fear of a scolding. This, of course, was only servants' gossip, which came to our ears through Marco; for, needless to say, nothing was seen or heard of any of his womenfolk.

This was my first visit to a Mohammedan house, and I found it rather awkward, for though B—— had coached me beforehand in the various points of etiquette to be observed, I constantly forgot at the critical moment what to do. I couldn't even get any hints from watching him, for being a stranger I was, in a way, the chief guest, and was always served first. It was decidedly embarrassing, for instance, to be presented by an obsequious manservant with a large brass tray on which were mysterious pots and glasses and spoons. What to do with them I couldn't think. What I did do I don't exactly remember now, but I am perfectly sure it was not what I ought to have done, and what I learned to do later, viz. to take a spoon from a

glass containing several, help myself with it to a mouthful of a sweet, sticky conserve of some fruit, and then place the spoon I had used in an empty glass on the other side of the tray put there for that purpose. Then cigarettes and coffee were handed to us as we sat on divans round the room, while B—— and our host exchanged compliments, and I tried to look interested in a conversation I couldn't understand. It was settled that we should dine and sleep there; but I was warned that dinner was likely to be a long time preparing. And it *was* a long time, finally appearing a little before midnight. We were very hungry, so that when a tray was brought in with various snacks of roast chicken, olives, pine pips, and small trifles of a similar nature, I was glad to help myself with my fingers like the rest, but for some time very sparingly, as I didn't want to spoil my dinner. However, the hours went by, and still the dinner didn't turn up, so that in desperation I made a meal on what was before me. These were washed down with small glasses of *raki*, a colourless spirit flavoured with aniseed. Our host, though a Mohammedan, drank copiously, until I calculated he must have had at least twenty-five glasses, and when the dinner finally appeared he was in a jovial mood. The *pièce de resistance* came first in the shape of a lamb roasted whole. This alone was sufficient to account for the delay, as no doubt the

beast was alive when we rode up, and had to be killed and cooked. It was certainly cooked to perfection, and our host had no difficulty in pulling it to pieces with his hands. B—— on these occasions has Marco to help to wait, besides the servants of the house, and travels provided with plates and knives and forks in case these necessary articles, from our point of view, should be omitted. I had some difficulty in getting through my first liberal help, especially as Humdy Bey kept putting fresh pieces on to my plate. Diving into the interior of the lamb he would pull out the kidneys, or some similar morsel, and give it to me in his hand. This is considered a mark of honour; but I could only look forward with apprehension to the succeeding courses, and hope that I should be able to keep going. The last dish was the *pilaff*, mutton stewed with rice; but before this appeared nearly a dozen courses, alternately meats and sweets, were served until I was in desperation. Turkish sweets are fearful concoctions—very sweet, very sickly, and very tasteless. The wine was of a special kind, of which the Turks think very highly, made of grapes naturally perfumed. It tastes as if heavily flavoured with scent, and I thought it particularly offensive.

The correct fashion is to eat enormously, and to express repletion audibly in a very disgusting fashion. Our host set the example, but we, his

guests, were unable to follow suit as we should have done, and were no doubt considered very degenerate and ill-bred in consequence.

It was a great relief when the meal was at last finished, long past midnight, and we were left alone. Marco and the servants had cleared away the table and spread for us on the floor two mattresses and gorgeously-coloured coverlets of flowered silk, on which we slept comfortably the sleep of utter satisfaction.

Early in the morning—too early for me, for I would gladly have had another hour or two—we were roused by Marco bringing water and towels, and an indiarubber collapsible basin. This was another indispensable article always carried, and I found it so necessary that on B—— leaving Albania for the United States, I bought it from him. You can't wash yourself at all satisfactorily, Turkish fashion, by having a little water poured over your hands out of a brass teapot over a shallow brass tray.

After breakfast we started off again under the guidance of two Albanian retainers of the Bey, lean, wild-looking mountaineers mounted on rough, shaggy horses, each man carrying a Martini slung over his shoulder.

All day we rode, sometimes over hills covered with brushwood, sometimes ploughing through

treacherous bogs. Once we stopped for a half-hour's rest and a cup of coffee at a small *han*, or Turkish inn. Here I was amused at seeing two buffaloes resting from their labours after ploughing, submerged in a small but muddy pond, while their owner plastered them liberally with wet mud scooped up with his hands. This was, of course, to protect them from insects.

On the way we put up, from a dead and putrid cow, two Sea Eagles and two Egyptian Vultures, the first I had seen in these regions. I should have much liked to wait for their return, but it was too far from anywhere to be worth while. Besides, we were now too large a party, and it didn't seem practicable to stop the whole cavalcade for a doubtful chance of a photograph. Presently we found we were approaching the large lake, which was one of the objects of the expedition to explore, but on the wrong side. The guides had mistaken the direction, and appeared to be in some doubt as to our whereabouts. Finally, after a look at the map, we took charge ourselves, and they had to follow us, which they did at a distance and very unwillingly. The ground was very boggy, even for Albania, and the going was the worst I had ever experienced. Sometimes it proved impossible to proceed, and we had to try another way round; but after struggling for a couple of hours, and crossing with great

difficulty a narrow but very deep stream, we finally found ourselves in the right direction on the right side of the lake.

It was by now midday and very hot, and our horses were badly in need of a rest ; so, seeing a large fig-tree close to some huts, the word was given to off-saddle. The luncheon basket was unpacked, and some eggs procured from the people, and we were soon enjoying a welcome meal.

The Baron had a very good cook, a German, and even when dining in the open air away from home we generally fared very well—the first day, at any rate. The second day out, after the basket was exhausted, of course we had to take our chance with what we could get.

This lake covered a large expanse, but more resembled a vast reed-bed than a lake ; we could only see at a distance from the summit of a hill two pieces of open water. I should say that it would be full of breeding Herons, for we saw quantities of Little Egrets, Glossy Ibis, Squacco Herons, and similar birds ; but there were no signs of a colony of Pelicans. The people told us that they didn't nest there ; and, as they seemed to know what they were talking about, which isn't always the case in these parts, we determined to ride on over a range of hills to our second locality. For hours we rode in single file, winding in and out along a narrow path through

the woods, which covered the hills thickly, now stooping under an overhanging branch, now swaying on one side to avoid a tree-trunk or rocky projection. Towards evening we arrived at a miserable village, and the guides rode on to the house of the chief inhabitant, a small farmer, to arrange that he should give us quarters for the night. In all probability he was simply ordered to do so in the name of the Bey, their master.

Whether this was the case or not we were received very hospitably, and shown up a rickety ladder to the living-room, which was over the cowshed and stable, as usual. All night we could hear the beasts moving about, and we could also smell them! The courtyard round the house was used as a cattle-yard, and was literally knee-deep in liquid mud and filth. In one corner of the room was a pile of golden maize, while in the middle burnt the usual log-fire, filling the room full of smoke. Cushions and rugs were spread for the Baron and myself, while our men were made comfortable in another room, and coffee and cigarettes were quickly brought to us.

There seemed to be an unusual number of stalwart Albanians about the house, every man armed with his Martini, and a double row of shining brass cartridges round his waist. At dinner, which we ate squatting on the floor at a table four inches high, we three were waited on by six Albanians, whose

rifles hung on the wall behind ready for use. It turned out that our host had a vendetta, or blood-feud hanging over him, and was obliged to maintain a bodyguard of ten men, who were eating him out of house and home. He besought B—— to try to make some arrangements through Humdy Bey to settle the feud by a compromise; and I believe the Bey afterwards expressed his willingness to use his influence towards ending the affair for a payment of about £30, the bulk of which would probably go into his own pocket. While waiting for dinner we had some impromptu shooting at a mark, a piece of broken tile on a hillside some 200 yards away. When, at his third shot, B—— broke it in half with his Mannlicher carbine, the enthusiasm was immense. The weapon was handed round from hand to hand and examined, while anxious inquiries were made as to the price of a similar one. Several of the men wished to sell their Martinis and get one like it if it were possible.

Nowhere have I seen such interest taken in weapons, especially in firearms, as is manifested by the people in these countries. To possess a rifle is the first necessary of life. Even the boys, as soon as they reach the age of sixteen, may be seen armed like their fathers. In fact, one is hardly accounted a man without one. Frequently one sees the old long-barrelled Turkish muzzle-loading rifle with

curved stock, sometimes beautifully inlaid. Many, probably the majority, carry Martinis, the stocks of which are decorated with brass-headed nails in lines and circles. They are generally old, and I should imagine, in spite of the care they take of them, that the barrels must be very worn and corroded. The mountaineers very frequently have Mauser magazine carbines, and very handy weapons they are, especially on horseback, and I believe they are very accurate. The curious thing is that these people, accustomed as they are to shooting all their lives, are not first-rate shots except at short range, and I am told they are bad judges of distance. When it came to shooting competitions, both B—— and I could always beat them hollow. I fancy their shooting at one another is at close quarters, and under cover, behind a tree or rock, on which they can rest their rifle, and behind which they are protected from any shots in return. But they make sure of the first shot; it doesn't pay to miss in these countries. I think a man at 600 yards would be pretty safe, especially from Martinis, the trajectory of which is much higher than with the Mauser and other modern rifles, so that any error in judging the distance would render the man shot at perfectly safe. Another reason is, I expect, the high price of cartridges, which are all smuggled. This makes them unwilling to risk uncertain shots



THE AUTHOR IN ALBANIAN COSTUME

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at anything, and they don't get enough constant practice. The rifles are handed over to the host on entering another man's house, and are left in the guard-house on entering most of the towns, but the bandolier of cartridges is never laid aside. Even at night I believe they are slept in, and the men certainly sleep in their clothes, including the fez, for I have many a time slept alongside them on the floor, round the fire. Now a single row of Martini cartridges all round the body is a considerable weight, and as many men carry two complete rows, the burden constantly carried must be very great. But I have noticed occasionally, whether from inability to replace them from poverty, or to economize weight, that some of them are merely empty cases which have been fired, and consequently have no bullets in them. Considered merely as an article of dress, the even row of shining brass cases against the scarlet waistband is most effective and picturesque, and certainly gives a man a martial appearance. The whole Albanian costume is very wild and fantastic, especially the wide white kilt like a big fluted petticoat ; but the more usual garb is a pair of trousers fitting tightly to the leg, made of thick white felt, decorated in a weird and curious fashion with broad black braid. These are held up by a scarlet sash wound many times round the body, in the folds of which is the revolver, while the

cartridges for the rifle are held in a leather bandolier put over the waistband. The black jacket, with heavy tufts of black worsted on the shoulders and arms and a long black fringe hanging down the back, makes a man look much bigger than he really is and adds much to his imposing appearance. (I was surprised to find on donning the costume what a difficulty I had to squeeze myself into it.) The fez is always white, either square topped, like the Turkish red fez, but without the tassel, or round, like a skull cap; and round the head and under the chin is wrapped a white head-cloth. The rifle is carried slung over the left shoulder when on foot, but a mounted man more often holds it in front of him across the saddle. It is then ready for instant use.

In spite of the vendetta our host saddled his mare in the morning and accompanied us on our way through the forest in order to take us to two fishermen to whom he had sent word overnight, and who were considered to be the most likely persons to know about the Pelicans.

It was a happy thought to send for these men, for it was through them that we at last succeeded in finding the Pelicans' nesting-place. Clad in loose, brown garments, with keen, wild faces and piercing eyes, these two fishermen resembled birds of prey. They were very civil, and said at once that they



EMBARKING WITH THE FISHERMEN



PELICANS

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knew where the Pelicans nested, and that they could conduct us to the place. One of them could speak Italian, and described their nests and eggs, so that we started off with them in two rude dug-out canoes in high spirits. The Baron squatted in the bottom of one, while I did the same in the other, and the men paddled with single paddles at the stern. There were numbers of Pelicans swimming about, and presently we could see in front of us on the horizon a white mass. These our guides declared to be Pelicans sitting on their nests.

How eagerly we scrutinized them through our glasses as we drew nearer and nearer! After a time it appeared as if the birds were sitting on the farther shore in front of a belt of tamarisks, but as we advanced we found that this was not the case. The nests were at last made out to be on two low, sandy islets some distance from the shore. The men, on being asked, said they could take us to within thirty yards of the islands without causing much disturbance. This we found to be the case; and accordingly I stepped out of my canoe with the camera (the water was not much more than knee-deep) and proceeded to make sure of some photographs in case of not being able to get at closer quarters. But in our hurried journey across country we had not been able to bring more than one box of photographic plates in addition to those

already in position in the slides ; and when I started to use these I found to my dismay that the whole boxful had been reduced to powder. The pack-saddle had undoubtedly received a hard knock against a tree or rock, probably in traversing the forest the previous day.

There was nothing left to do but to examine the colony, take a few eggs, and hurry back for a better supply of plates, and to come again provided with a tent so as to be able to camp out on the shores of the lagoon within easy reach of the islands. We could thus be independent of the villagers, be much nearer the Pelicans, and could remain as long as we liked.

It was still only early in the morning, and by riding hard we reached the Bey's house that same night, and the Consulate the following day.

At once we set to work to pack the tent and provisions, and started all the things off early the next morning on two pack-horses, while we followed later, after breakfast, with Marco. One of the fishermen—the younger one—accompanied the pack-horses, having brought the eggs we had taken well packed in moss in a basket. He had done the whole distance on foot, arriving overnight in a drenched condition, as there had been a series of thunderstorms all day. He was now walking back, very footsore, and very stiff from having slept in his



PELICANS ON THEIR NESTS (PELECANUS CRISPUS)

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saturated clothes, but very contented with the liberal backsheesh I had given him for bringing them safely.

Halting again at the Bey's for something to eat and to rest the horses, in the middle of the day, we pushed on as hard as we could, and reached the shores of the lagoon in the evening. Before night fell we had pitched the tent in the forest, and made a rousing fire.

The villagers were amazed at our preferring to sleep in the forest, affirming that it was not safe, many robbers being known to be about ; and they pressed us repeatedly to put up in the village. One man was quite importunate in begging us to sleep at his house. But we were a strong party, four men besides ourselves, all of us well armed with Martinis and magazine rifles ; and we decided to stay where we were and chance any attack.

As a matter of fact two nights passed off peaceably, although there was a certain amount of danger—or would have been for a weaker party. And we were much more comfortable in the well-appointed tent with our own things and Marco to wait on us and cook, than in a smoky and dirty native hut. We slept comfortably if not luxuriously, B—— in his camp-bed, and I in my sleeping-bag and rug placed on an indiarubber ground sheet, my constant companions in all these wanderings in strange countries, bird-hunting and collecting.

These articles don't take up much room on a pack-horse, and are less bulky and weighty than a tent; and it is a great advantage when travelling in a wild and sparsely inhabited country to know that in case of need one can sleep out in the open if belated and unable to reach one's destination by nightfall. For after dark it is impossible to travel over such a rough country. Snugly enveloped in my bag, I have slept warmly and comfortably on cold nights with ice on the ground outside the tent, and even in the open air on damp ground during heavy rain.

Turning out early in the morning, we were soon afloat with our friends the fishermen, and on reaching the islands I was landed quietly with camera and several dozen plates, and left to myself. B— remained on a small island opposite, where, prone on the ground, he watched the proceedings through his glass.

There was no great difficulty in approaching the birds. Taking care to move slowly and quietly, and not to cause them undue alarm at first, I found it possible to advance nearer and nearer, taking photographs at each stopping-place, and then crawling a little nearer for another batch. In this way they ultimately permitted me to come within twelve or fifteen yards. If sometimes they left their nests it was only for a short distance, and they soon returned and resumed their places on their eggs,



NEST OF PELICAN (PELECANUS CRISPUS)

apparently satisfied that I was not in any way dangerous.

It was a great satisfaction to find myself at last at such close quarters and on such familiar terms with these birds, which had evaded my pursuit for a whole month, and to be able to watch the habits of such a wary and comparatively little known species—little known, that is, of course, in a wild state, Pelicans in captivity being very common objects in all zoological gardens.

The nests were usually in groups of six or eight together, some of them quite small and flat on the ground—mere flat-trodden rings of sticks; but in each group there were generally one or two considerably higher than the rest. These were well and completely made of sticks and about two feet high—very similar to a Cormorant's nest, but better made and with a deeper hollow. Two eggs appeared to be the full clutch; these were long and white and chalky, but by this date, May 4, the great majority of the nests contained young birds. However, nine clutches of eggs were obtained, and a few more might have been taken. As these were fairly fresh it is probable they were second layings. A great number of the young were as large as their parents, and were swimming about in the lagoon, so it is evident that they must begin nesting operations very early in the year. Others were still in the

nests—a few only a day or two old, others as large as a goose. Many young were scattered over the island, sitting on the sand; the smaller ones progressed by crawling, helping themselves along with their wings.

Those in down presented a curious appearance. Their colour was a dull, dirty white, with leaden-coloured beaks and feet, and small pouches of the same colour. These young Pelicans made a constant moaning sound like the lowing of cows, or as B—— described it, like buffaloes.

The stomach of one of these young birds in down which I skinned was enormously distended, and contained a large double handful of what looked like vegetable matter. It was difficult to imagine that it could have proceeded from a fish diet, but rather resembled the contents of a goose's stomach after grazing in a field. I had several opportunities of watching the young being fed by their parents. Naumann says^r that *Pelecanus onocrotalus* feeds its young from the pouch. In the case of *Pelecanus crispus*, however, the young bird inserts its whole head down the parent's throat much lower than the opening of the pouch. In fact, the point of the young bird's beak could be distinctly seen pressing from inside at the base of the old bird's neck. In this observation I was corroborated by B——, who watched with his glass from a neighbouring islet on which were also



OUR PARTY PREPARING TO CROSS AN ALBANIAN RIVER



LANDING THE PELICAN

Photographs by Baron Bornemisza

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many nests. His description of what he observed exactly corresponded in every particular with what I saw myself as described above.

The old birds frequently yawned, stretching their necks and beaks upright, at the same time arching their lower mandibles, which are exceedingly flexible, into the shape of a hoop. It *may* be perhaps that this is an attempt to dislodge the numbers of parasites, like intestinal worms, which adhere in large numbers to the inside of the pouch. Large bunches of these worms were found inside the pouch of an adult female which was shot and skinned.

The peculiar character of the skin was very noticeable. It was porous and cellular to an extraordinary degree, resembling nothing so much as a series of innumerable air bubbles. Even the body had large air cavities, and the bones were very hollow. This porosity no doubt helps to support their huge bodies in the air, and so must serve a most useful purpose during flight. They fly well and strongly, with the head drawn back and the beak resting on the doubled-back neck.

This colony had its parasites in the shape of Hooded Crows (*Corvus cornix*) and Gulls (*Larus cachinnans*) which walked about among their huge hosts in a most familiar, not to say impudent manner. They no doubt act as scavengers, and

devour the fish dropped, and also the eggs, and those young birds which are dead in the nests. Eagles also were described by the fishermen as spending whole days devouring the young Pelicans, and we found the remains of a nearly full-grown young bird almost entirely eaten, and near by lay the wing feather of an Imperial Eagle.

The fishermen to my surprise did not appear to regard the Pelicans, as I had been told they did, as rivals, as it were, in business. I had heard that they destroyed their eggs whenever they had the opportunity. But on the contrary, they had quite a friendly regard for them, and were quite unwilling for any of them to be shot.

Curiously enough, too, they denied that they fed on fish, and were quite surprised when a mass of eels which they had disgorged was pointed out to them. On the other hand, they gladly went in pursuit of a wounded *Larus cachinnans* which had been winged, and described these birds as being very mischievous and doing a great deal of damage to the fishing.

The soil of the islands was entirely composed of shell-sand—broken-up cockle-shells. The only vegetation was a species of samphire, growing like heather, but this only flourished on the parts where there were no nests. In the neighbourhood of the nests this was utterly destroyed and



ALBANIAN FERRY



OUR CAMP IN THE FOREST

Photographs by Baron Bornemisza]

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trodden down. In it were countless hosts of mosquitoes and poisonous-looking horse-flies, and I fully expected to be fearfully tormented by them. However, much to my relief, I was not stung once during my five hours' stay on the islet. The same flies were met with later in the Dobrudscha, when I was not so lucky. They can fetch blood every time!

This expedition of ours, being quite unauthorized, caused great excitement in the minds of the Turkish authorities. I heard afterwards that the telegraph wires between Scutari and Constantinople were kept busy with official reports and inquiries about the mysterious Englishman who was travelling about the country without leave or licence. As they could not get hold of me they put into prison the poor Albanian, whose only offence was that he had given us food and shelter for a night. He was accused of 'conspiring with foreigners,' and B——, on hearing of it, had considerable difficulty in effecting his release. All the time, as it happened, I was provided with official permission from Constantinople, but I had not known that I was within the jurisdiction of the Governor-General of Scutari, to whom I had been recommended. He had actually received from Constantinople telegraphic orders to assist me in all my undertakings.

It will not be an easy matter in future for anybody

to penetrate as far as we did, for the natives will, not unnaturally, oppose any visit, for fear of getting into trouble again. This is no doubt exactly the effect desired by the Turks, and after all it will serve a good purpose in protecting the Pelicans from any molestation, for they appear to be receding farther and farther from civilization, and I hope that this particular colony may remain in undisturbed possession of their remote islands for very many years.

VIII

THE SEARCH AFTER THE GREAT WHITE HERON

THE quest of the Pelican having been brought at last to a successful end, I set to work packing up and making preparations to start for the Dobrudscha to look for the other European Pelican, *Pelecanus onocrotalus*. But before the steamer arrived by which I expected to travel to Trieste, in order to take the train to Roumania, I received telegraphic instructions to proceed to Scutari in Albania to search for the Great White Heron (*Ardea alba*).

This is one of the least known among European birds by English naturalists, not so much on account of its rarity in point of numbers, for in places it still exists in more or less abundance; but these places are invariably very remote and inaccessible. It is also extremely shy, and with good reason. It has suffered persecution all over the world on account of the beautiful plumes which it assumes in the breeding season. These plumes and those of the Little Egret are known to the millinery trade

and the fashionable world as Ospreys, and fetch very high prices.

In consequence of this persecution these birds have become exterminated in most countries, and it is only in very remote and out-of-the-way places that they can exist at all. I did not altogether consider Scutari the best place, although I knew that they were to be found there, but my instructions left me no choice in the matter.

Now Scutari is not an easy place to get at, nor is it, when you do reach it, a very desirable place to live in. I could have gone overland from where I was, but it would have taken me four days over very difficult and dangerous country. There is also a small Italian steamer which runs up the Bojana river, when there is sufficient water, and calls at Scutari. But taking all things into consideration I determined to go by steamer to Dulcigno, and from there travel by horse. One reason for this was the hope of being able to procure the services of Djouraschkovitch as interpreter, for after my experience of Albanian towns I was not anxious to arrive at one alone and unable to understand the language.

But engaging Djouraschkovitch was not quite such a simple matter as I had expected. It turned out that he had employment at the Turkish Consulate, and also at the local office—a sort of town hall.

He declared himself unable to leave without procuring a substitute to do his work—and it seemed there was only one man in the place able to do the work. This one man naturally stuck out for his price; and eventually I had to promise to pay all expenses and £1 per day.

This matter being at last settled, two horses were engaged for the next day for us to ride, and two more, in charge of two men, as pack-horses to carry the luggage. We had a long and difficult journey in front of us, so an early start was made. After crossing the little ferry an hour beyond the town we struck off to the hills, crossing them in single file by means of a winding track. These tracks in Montenegro, as in Albania, over the mountains are probably nearly as old as the mountains themselves. As our horses toiled upwards in single file I noticed that each horse put its feet into the same place as the one preceding it, and looking more closely, it was evident that the solid, living rock was worn into holes like a rough stairway. What countless generations of men and horses must have passed over these mountains to have thus eaten out a visible path! The rocks, could they but speak, could tell queer tales of rapine, murder, and bloodshed. For thousands of years this country has been the scene of endless fighting, invasions, and marauding forays.

And it is so still. When on the frontier this year, only a few months ago, the 'capitan' of the little village I was in told me that within the last three years thirty men had been shot in his district alone. He described to me how one morning, riding through the forest, he came on five dead bodies lying around a pool of blood. The Albanians of Northern Albania are not only more fanatical and savage than they are in other parts, but the race hatred between them and the Montenegrins is as old as the hills, and is kept at fever heat by constant bickerings and bloodshed.

The frontier is in a constant state of turmoil and unrest, and both sides are ever on the watch. At present the Bojana river and the Lake of Scutari form a boundary between these ancient enemies, but only thirty years ago Turkish territory embraced the strip of coast, and included the town of Dulcigno and the port of Antivari, shutting off Montenegro entirely from the sea.

Travelling here one has to be always armed and ready for emergencies—almost to ride rifle in hand with the finger on the trigger, and across the border a man may be killed for the sake of the cartridges in his bandolier!

We had not proceeded very far before we discovered that one of the pack-horses was not up to the weight he carried. Coming down a steep and

stony hillside he nearly fell, and soon afterwards in a narrow lane he stumbled and rolled over, sending the man flying over his head. We were by now riding along the Bojana river, against whose strong current fleets of Turkish craft were sailing towards the town. I knew we should have to cross this river twice, and was told there were bridges. About these, however, I had my doubts, so that when we reached the first crossing I was not surprised to see on the other side a very ancient and crazy-looking ferryboat, but no bridge. They told me that it had been carried away by the winter's floods, but if so it had been swept away so completely that there was not the very slightest trace of it left, and the ferryboat looked as if it had been running since the Deluge.

They do not take the trouble here to make any landing-places for these ferryboats, and embarking horses, especially if they are at all restive, is a difficult and tedious business. However, in due time we did cross, bag and baggage. On the Albanian side we had coffee at the dirty little *han*—after some bother with the people, who were stupidly suspicious of the money we tendered in payment.

From here we were joined by a Turk, who was also going part of the way to Scutari, and we were glad of his company, for he knew the way, and none

of us did. There were now no roads which could be recognized as such. Sometimes we splashed between high banks through what was either a submerged road or a river-bed, I am not quite sure which; and at other times we rode over boggy ploughed fields covered with maize stubble, forcing our way through hedges and over ditches. Several times we had to turn back and make long détours owing to deep water in front. One deep river we crossed with some difficulty, my horse almost swimming. One of the pack-horses was just behind me—the same beast which had fallen before. Midway I heard a cry, and, turning my head, saw the pack-horse roll completely over and disappear under water. My luggage and the rider were also completely submerged. I had to ride back and help to cut loose the luggage, and repack it in mid-stream. Everything was of course completely saturated.

These are events of everyday occurrence when travelling in Albania, with the chance of being held up by brigands, or shot at by some fanatic, thrown in. The conditions are about equal to those met with in travelling in Central Africa, without the chance of seeing any big game.

However, everything comes to an end at last, and we were not sorry when we reached the outskirts of Scutari, though our troubles were by no means over. A long and very shaky wooden

bridge over the river had to be crossed. We all dismounted for this, and it certainly looked so rickety that I should not have been surprised if the whole structure had collapsed. At the guard-house at the end we were stopped and our passports examined, but of course there was nobody there able to read, so a sentry was sent with us through the town in search of an officer. After he was found another search had to be made for an interpreter, and when all this troublesome business was at last settled we had to retrace our steps through the bazaar for our things to be examined at the custom-house.

Our weary horses slipped and stumbled along in a stone-paved gutter full of filth, about a foot wide and nearly a foot deep, between rows of open booths or shops. The light overhead was shut off with crazy roofings, and mattings hung at every angle, while the bystanders jeered and made uncomplimentary and hostile remarks. I had no need to understand the language to perceive the nature of their behaviour, and on asking Djouraschkovitch afterwards he told me it was lucky I could not understand the actual words.

This town of Scutari, or Skodra, used to be the ancient capital of Montenegro, when that warlike little Principality was much larger than it is to-day, for it then included parts of Herzegovina and a part

of what is now Albania. But later it was ceded to Venice in return for assistance against the forces of Turkey. Since then it has been taken and retaken many times, and is now a Turkish town of some importance, and the chief town of a province or *vilayet*. It is without exception the most fanatical town I have ever seen. Murders are of constant occurrence. Quite recently two Christian judges, appointed to try Christian cases, were both shot dead as they sat at a café in the street, while the murderer boasted to a police officer of what he had done. No attempt was made to arrest him until Baron B——, who was then Consul, went to the Governor-General and insisted on his arrest, giving information at the same time as to where he was to be found. The house was not visited by the authorities for two days, and only then after they had sent notice to the culprit beforehand. Needless to say there was nobody there to arrest when they did search it.

At the custom-house, by a great bit of good luck, the officer in charge knew Djouraschkovitch, and we had no trouble. At last we were free to find an hotel which had been recommended to me. As soon as we had cleared the bazaar, whose streets were too narrow for wheeled vehicles, we chartered a cab and transhipped all our luggage into it.

Never have I seen such a cab before or since. An open carriage in the very last stage of decrepitude

and decay, two groggy-looking horses harnessed with scraps of leather and bits of rope and string, and driven by a dirty individual in a tattered great-coat and a fez. But this ramshackle turn-out must have been stronger than it seemed or it would never have survived one trip through the town. I thought I knew the worst of Albanian roads, but this chief street, the main thoroughfare of one of the most important towns in Albania, was far worse than any road I have ever seen in any part of the world. Several puddles were, without any exaggeration, up to the axles; and as our Jehu, standing up in his box, urged on his crazy steeds, one terrific bump nearly sent us out headlong into the mud, and did quite send flying one of my portmanteaux. Djouraschkovitch turned quite white, and said he would get out and walk, 'that he didn't like it'; no more did I, but I prevailed on him to sit still; in fact, I held him in his seat. To tell the truth, I wanted him for ballast! Alone, and without his weight to steady the affair, I felt that it would be impossible for me to remain in it for a moment; I should presently be tossed up like a shuttlecock and find myself on my back in a morass.

It was a great relief at last to find ourselves under a decent roof with a good dinner in front of us. The hotel, to my surprise, was really comfortable and homelike. It was kept by a Serb, assisted by

his son and daughters. Perhaps compared with hotels in other cities it had its shortcomings; but considering the state of things outside it was a perfect oasis of comfort. And inside one felt safe, which, to tell the truth, I never once did outside the door. The Hôtel de l'Europe in Scutari, in Albania, is quite a pleasant recollection.

One day, hearing a great uproar in the street, I looked out and saw a powerfully-built mountaineer being marched along, firmly held on each side by two men. He was struggling violently and doing his best to get at his revolver. Behind them walked six soldiers with loaded rifles ready to shoot him the moment he should break away. It seemed he had gone into a café very drunk, and had started to throw the furniture about and to smash the crockery. On the proprietor objecting to this behaviour he had drawn his revolver and fired at him.

The mountaineers coming into the town are required to give up their rifles at the guard-house outside, but as they always have a revolver in their waistcloth this does not do much good. On bazaar days it is a curious and interesting sight to see these wild-looking people flocking into the town. On horseback and on foot they come in droves, driving small and shaggy ponies laden with firewood. Some of the younger women ride astride, the older ones stagger in on foot, veritable beasts of burden. I



FIREWOOD PONIES

have seen old women—judging from their appearance, eighty years of age, though perhaps in reality not more than fifty—bent double under enormous loads of firewood which they have cut in the mountains and carried in on their heads. If they can't sell it *they carry it back and bring it in again the next bazaar day*. When they do sell it the price may amount to as much as fourpence!

These poor old tottering creatures are barefooted and bareheaded, their only garments apparently a bit of rough sacking in front and another behind, and a coarse petticoat held together with a broad and heavy leather belt. Sitting on the curb at the edge of the path to rest, they are only able to rise again after repeated efforts. Once, seeing one of them vainly endeavouring to rise, I went out and gave a heave up behind to her load, to the great amusement of a crowd of loafers, who laughed and jeered at such an unusual act, while the poor old woman herself probably thought she was being moved on.

There are two dirty little Italian steamers running on the lake, which is over thirty miles long, and on one of these we embarked one morning for Plavnica, a small Montenegrin village at the farther end of the lake.

This lake is surrounded by high mountains, and, as is usual in such cases, subject to violent storms. I

never experienced a single fine day on it. There was always a thunderstorm raging on one or other of the mountain peaks. While the rest were lit up by a brilliant sun, round one particular peak the storm-clouds would gather, and the lightning would flash and the thunder roll and mutter, while the wind would rise and cause a regular little cyclone.

Many White Herons were seen fishing about the shallows, and once, passing one of the submerged forests of willows which are so commonly seen in these parts, I saw a nesting colony of Herons through the glass at a distance of perhaps half a mile. I was almost sure that they were the Great White Herons, a nesting colony of which I was so anxious to find, and I made a mental note of the place with the intention of returning to pay it a visit at the first opportunity.

On arriving at Plavnica we arranged to sleep at a rough-looking wine-shop, or *han*, and while our things were being carried in I set Djouraschkovitch to work questioning his countrymen about the White Herons.

'Oh yes,' they said, 'there were any number of them, and they were nesting in great abundance.' One man declared that he knew a big tree quite close with at least fifty nests on it. He was engaged at once to conduct me to the place, while Djouraschkovitch made things straight and arranged about our supper.

Off I started with this man, with great hopes of

an easy conclusion to my search. I ought to have known better. In whatever part of the world I have been in the peasants are almost invariably utterly ignorant of birds and quite unable to tell one from the other even in their own language. Neither the Spanish herdsmen nor the Albanian peasants, who see Eagles and Vultures every day of their lives, can tell the difference between them ; they don't, in fact, know there is any difference. I had brought with me a series of coloured tracings of birds, with the local names in various European languages to help me in making inquiries, but found them utterly useless. An Inspector of Fisheries in Roumania, for instance, a man sufficiently educated at all events to keep accounts and write reports, on being shown a Little Egret said it was *Lebeda*. Now I knew *Lebeda* in the Dobrudscha means Swan ! He only saw the bird was white, but could not see that the shape of an Egret is as unlike as it could possibly be to that of a Swan. It is sufficiently exasperating to make a long day's journey only to find something not worth going out of the way for ; and yet you have to chance it. Your information may be right, or it may be wrong, it probably is wrong, but all the same you must go and see for yourself ; and you have to pay just as much for false information as if it had led to a good result. Sure enough, after walking, or rather wading, about

three miles we saw a large tree in which were perhaps a dozen nests of *Ardea cinerea*, the Common Grey Heron!

At this time of year the low-lying lands are fearfully water-logged. Everywhere the ground is flooded. The fields have from a foot to two feet of water; the forests are submerged half-way up the trunks of the trees; the roads—where there are any—are a succession of puddles and morasses, so that working here it is simply impossible to keep dry. On foot you are constantly mid-leg deep in water, and even riding you very soon become wet with the splashing of water and liquid mud. Anybody liable to rheumatism would very soon be crippled after birds'-nesting here. And it is curious what a number of snakes there are in the water; even the puddles on the road often have three or four snakes swimming about in them, and in the ditches they simply swarm. Most of them are harmless, but on one of these aquatic expeditions I came on a very deadly-looking viper coiled up asleep on the stile between one flooded field and another. The broad, flat head and unmistakable expression left no doubt as to its dangerous character. I nearly got a photograph of it, but while putting in the plate, after focusing at very close quarters, it uncoiled itself and glided away, greatly to the relief of my guide, who was in a great fright.

Returning to the village I found our supper nearly ready, and the floor of a carpenter's shed adjoining swept out and more or less tidied up for our reception. Squatting around the wood-fire on the floor we dined in company with some labourers, who were discharging goods from a barge, Montenegrins and Turks; and very good company they were. Turkish coffee followed the stew, and cigarettes, of course; after which we all lay down round the fire and slept comfortably.

The morning was very unpropitious for our work. Heavy and continuous rain delayed our start for some hours. A boat and a couple of men had been engaged to take us to a likely marsh on the Albanian side; all the luggage was piled up amidships and covered with my waterproof sheet, while Djouraschkovitch and myself huddled together in waterproofs at the stern, covered or partly covered with an umbrella he had thoughtfully *borrowed* from the hotel. He had forgotten the trifling ceremony usual in such cases, of asking permission from the owner; but I did not feel inclined to find fault with him, and only regretted that he had not brought away two instead of only one.

As soon as we reached the open water it became evident that we could not possibly reach our intended destination. The wind was blowing half a gale, and the waves threatened every moment to

swamp our heavily laden boat. The two boatmen flatly refused to cross the lake, and for some time we could only cling on under the lee of a submerged willow-tree, which gave us a slight shelter, while we deliberated as to what could be done.

Finally it was decided to go in the opposite direction, which would bring us to the heronry I had seen from the steamer the previous day, and we should be able to keep, most of the way, under the shelter of a belt of submerged trees, reed-beds, and water-lilies. A big bed of water-lilies makes a most efficient breakwater. The force of the heaviest waves is quickly spent and lost among the heavy, floating leaves and long stalks of the lilies; and in place of the heavy water continually breaking over the boat we rode comfortably and easily over a long, oily swell. But the rain continued, and though heavy rain is also very good in keeping down a sea, yet it is most miserable to sit in a small boat with no room to move, exposed hour after hour to its pitiless pelting.

Seeing at last a small huddle of poverty-stricken huts on a rocky shore we determined to land for the purpose of obtaining a hot meal of some kind if it were possible. But the only things eatable to be had were some smoked fish, which we broiled over the fire in one of the houses. The people here were so poor that though they had coffee there was

no sugar in the house. However, they managed to get some from a neighbour, and very welcome we found a cup of hot coffee in our drenched condition. The small sum I gave in payment was accepted gratefully, the woman kissing my hand as I left: this I found to be a very common form of salutation and a way of expressing thanks for any benefits, but one I felt rather embarrassing. Men frequently do it as well as women, especially after receiving a liberal backsheesh for any services they have rendered. More embarrassing still is it to be embraced and kissed by an Albanian, bristling with deadly weapons.

It was still raining heavily when we re-embarked, still very wet but rather more comfortable after our rest and refreshment.

Presently we approached the heronry I had noticed, but, to my great disgust, I found that this time I had myself mistaken the Common Grey Heron for the Great White Heron. The bright sunshine on the white necks of the birds, and the fact that their bodies were hidden by the branches, together with the distance at which the steamer had passed, had helped to mislead me. There were many nests on the tops of a clump of tall willows growing in deep water; and from the treetops came the unmistakable chipping cry of young Herons. Evidently the eggs had all hatched, but to make sure I

climbed to one of the nests to see what there was. And a nasty climb it was in my wet clothes. The boat plunged and rolled in the heavy sea which surged among the trees, while the trunks were perfectly slimy with moisture. To add to my difficulties, the small branches were very rotten, and broke off short in my hands as I ascended one after the other. Djouraschkovitch was in a great fright, shouting frantically, 'Monsieur, descendez-vous, je vous prie; les ramiers sont trop faibles pour vous; vous tomberez,' &c., &c.

However, I got up all right, only to find young birds, as I expected, and descended safely, though stepping into the plunging boat from the slippery trunk was no easy job, as the men were unable to bring it in very close; though even if I had gone overboard—as I fully expected to do—I could not have been any wetter than I was already. I was glad to find myself once more inside the boat, uncomfortable as it was, and we proceeded on our way, more or less dispirited by this fresh disappointment.

It was now necessary to cross an open arm of the lake exposed to the full force of the wind. Luckily both wind and rain had by now somewhat abated; and after a hard pull, during which the waves frequently broke over us, half-filling the boat, we finally arrived at a village on the Montenegrin side.

The Lake of Scutari forms a natural boundary between the two countries, the frontier running diagonally across. There was a very decent little inn at this village, Vir-Pazar, where we stopped for the night. It was a market day, and the busy but peaceful scene in the streets was a pleasant change after our experiences in Scutari.

After dinner we had a conversation with two Montenegrin gentlemen stopping there on their way to Cetinje, the capital, one a doctor, the other some official. On learning I was an Englishman they began to pour their troubles into my ears, in the most impassioned language, begging for the protection of England as the only way to save their country from Austria or Italy on the one side, and from Turkey on the other. In vain I pleaded that I was not the Prime Minister, but merely an obscure naturalist with no influence whatsoever; that England had quite enough on her hands without incurring the further jealousy of all the great European powers, who were already jealous enough; that even if I wrote to the papers, and had my writings accepted, my name would carry no weight at all; and that the complications of Balkan politics were far beyond my comprehension or the comprehension of anybody who had not given them a life-long study. All this was of no avail; they still talked and pleaded, sometimes with tears in their

eyes, as they spoke of the dreadful barbarities to which they had been subjected. And certainly, though I must have lost a good deal—for they spoke at length in Servian, which had to be translated into French by my interpreter, and my replies in French translated again into Servian—yet I heard enough to sympathize with them even if it was out of my power to help them. I heard tales of peaceful Montenegrin peasants being shot dead while ploughing in their own fields by some bloodthirsty Albanian across the frontier, out of mere sport, and blood-curdling accounts of how their girls and women are constantly seized and carried over the border, never to be seen again by their friends, parents, or husbands, sometimes to be butchered by being knocked on the head with an axe when their captors have tired of them.

All this was very painful, and though perhaps some of these tales were slightly coloured by national prejudice, still I knew enough to realize that in the main these terrible accounts were true, and also that it has only been through great difficulty and constant fighting that Montenegro has until now preserved her independence. But whether the protection of England is really desired by the people I am not in a position to say. I know that England is still regarded with gratitude and affection ever since the British fleet made a

demonstration in Dulcigno harbour and compelled the Turks, who were advancing to the attack, to retire, and I can quite believe that if the protection of any country became necessary they would prefer that of England. But I must say that I was very glad when finally, at a very late hour, they retired to their room and left me free to go to bed, for I had had a long and tiring day.

The next day we boarded the steamer for the return voyage to Scutari. If possible, this steamer was smaller and dirtier than the one in which we had gone to Plavnica. Besides which, the captain, the engineer, the agent, and several passengers were exceedingly drunk on the bridge. Singing and shouting, throwing empty bottles about the deck, and reeling to and fro, they caused a pandemonium I have never seen equalled in any ship in any part of the world—and I have seen some curious sights, too, in my travels. Luckily the steersman and the engineer in charge of the engines were sober, and the weather was fine, so that in due time we reached our destination.

In my innocence I imagined that, as we had passed the custom-house only three days ago we should have no more trouble; but I was soon to know better. Luckily I had determined not to bring a gun in case of confiscation, only a revolver in my pocket out of sight; but the officials quickly

got to work *à la Turque*, and my things were strewed about all over the floor. I had with me tools and materials for preserving birdskins, and when they found a bag of plaster of Paris, and asked what it was, I told them 'Poison, arsenic.' The man who was holding it at once dropped it as if it were red-hot, much to my amusement. But he soon found a piece of insulated copper wire belonging to the electric camera and took possession of it. Anything of the nature of electric apparatus is always regarded with great suspicion here, where they have a lively apprehension of bombs. However, as I could not replace this I quietly took it out of his hands and put it in my pocket. Next moment the dry battery was unearthed. This confirmed their suspicions, and I had to give up again the rescued wire, and they were promptly confiscated. I was by this time thoroughly angry, and told them in plain language what sort of fools I thought them, that the electric arrangement was only for photographic purposes, and that I should complain to the *Vali*, or Governor-General, and insist on their return, and that he, the *Vali*, had received telegraphic orders from Constantinople to assist me, and had personally given me permission to do as I liked here.

Though I thought I made a decided impression by all this, they still refused to give them up. But

by making a complaint to the British Vice-Consul, who, by the way, was a wealthy Albanian who could speak no English, they were compelled to restore them to me within a couple of days.

That evening my hopes were again raised by a visit from the secretary of the Austrian Consulate, to whom I had brought an introduction from Baron B——. He told me that he had, at my request, sent a fisherman, whom he sometimes employed, to search for nests of the White Heron while I was at Plavnica, and that he had reported the finding of several nests with eggs.

This circumstantial report, from a man described by M. Ljoubanovitch as trustworthy, seemed at last to promise well. It was agreed that Ljoubanovitch and myself should accompany this fisherman to the spot where he had found the nests, that he was to come for me soon after daybreak, and that we should go down to the custom-house to embark together.

This was done, but the morning again was most unpromising. We started in heavy rain, and my companion, who was crippled in one leg with long-standing rheumatism, was in such evident pain that I refused to allow him to proceed, and said I would go alone with the fisherman and his son.

They were Turks, and of course I could not speak a word to them, but they were very civil and plausible, and I thought I should be able to manage

with them. However, the rain got worse and worse, the wind rose, the thunder rolled just over our heads, and the lightning ran in sheets over the water. It was a terrible day, and several times we took refuge behind a tree before we could proceed. After some hours of this my boatmen at last refused to go on. Their hands shook, their teeth chattered, and their dusky faces went an unearthly pallid blue-grey colour. They were evidently 'done,' and absolutely unable to proceed. The fact is these Turkish fishermen, though muscular and very strong, are soft, and unable to stand bad weather. The day was certainly as bad as I have ever experienced; but I am sure no English boatman or fisherman would have been in such a state of collapse as they were.

There was no help for it, of course, and I was compelled to return, *volens volens*. The next day we tried again, this time taking my interpreter, Djouraschkovitch. Again we had heavy rain on the way, but eventually it cleared up, and we reached a submerged forest where the nests were supposed to be. The interpreter was left on a sandy island while we attempted to force the *londra* (boat) into the forest. It was, I saw at once, too big for the work. The trunks were close to one another and matted together in inextricable confusion with fallen trees and branches, creepers,



ATTITUDES OF GREAT WHITE HERON WHEN FEEDING

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and every description of obstacle. By dint of great exertion, all three of us pushing with the oars with all our strength, we managed to penetrate perhaps 100 yards into this labyrinth, and there we stuck. At this point I went overboard up to my waist and pushed behind, while the two Turks worked with the oars against the trunks of the stunted trees, and in this manner we progressed about as far again. Then the men began to look about as if they had reached the spot. It was not possible to see more than a few yards on each side of us, so I took my revolver and fired a shot, hoping to see Herons rising from their nests against the sky. But no such result happened. There was evidently nothing there, and we returned, with the same difficulty, to where we had left the interpreter, as I felt that some explanation was desirable.

As I expected, a close cross-examination brought out the fact that they had never found any nests at all, and I firmly believe they had never even attempted to look. They had brought me to this place 'on spec.', trusting to my finding something. In fact, they had behaved exactly as Turks generally may be expected to behave, whatever their station in life.

Pelicans were frequently to be seen on the lake, and no doubt they breed somewhere in the impenetrable swamps, submerged forests, and morasses

to be found on the low-lying Albanian side of the lake; but as I had already found them breeding farther south I did not trouble further about them. I had no doubt that the Great White Heron, too, must be nesting in similar situations; but the difficulty was how to search such a labyrinth, especially as the fishermen absolutely refused to take me out farther away from the town. They said that if they were to be seen searching about with Christians we should all certainly be shot by the people inhabiting the country between the lake and the hills.

In the meantime I had noticed that several White Herons were in the habit of feeding close to the Custom-house in the very early morning, where the water is shallow, and as there was a belt of willow-trees which would serve to hide behind, I determined to try to photograph them there.

The next morning I succeeded in photographing *Ardea alba*, fishing in this spot, and had the best view I had yet been able to have of their method of feeding. For close to my hiding-place I was able to watch three different species of Herons and to compare their behaviour.

The common Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) stood in its usual and well-known position, motionless and expectant, ready to make a lightning-like stroke with its pointed beak the moment any unwary fish



GREAT WHITE HERON AND LITTLE EGRET



GREAT WHITE HERON FEEDING (ARDEA ALBA)

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or frog should approach it. *Ardea alba*, on the contrary, stalked rapidly hither and thither, never stopping still but always in motion, snapping quickly to right and left as it went, at small fry, aquatic insects and suchlike, while *Ardea garzetta*, the Little Egret, fairly ran through the water, using its wings to help it along when it saw anything likely to escape at a little distance, in its eagerness to secure it.

Ardea alba had been described to me as an awkward-looking bird, and certainly some of its postures are ungainly; but at other times, especially when, with neck arched ready for the stroke, and uplifted foot, it advances deliberately through the water, it is the perfection of grace and beauty, while its snowy plumage adds much to its appearance, whether seen against a background of reeds or willows, or wading in water with dark reflections. The dorsal plumes hang over the tail, giving it a Crane-like look, so that I could find some excuse for their being called 'White Cranes' in a book on Albania and Scutari which I have lately read.

At this point Djouraschkovitch, who had been in a 'blue funk' all the time we had been in Scutari, positively refused to stop there any longer. Never again, he said, would he put foot inside this place, not even if I gave him £5 a day. And as I had given up by now all hope of doing any more

good there I consented to leave as soon as we could pack and make arrangements for horses for the return journey.

It was determined to ride to a small village on the frontier which I had visited before, there being there an undisturbed marsh, which I thought would be the most likely place to find such shy birds as those I was in search of.

We had the usual difficulties on the journey, increased by the fortnight's heavy rain. One deep ford was so swollen that our progress was delayed for some time, while we tried in vain to find a safe place to cross. Eventually we succeeded in doing so, but the horses were almost carried off their feet by the heavy water. Then, while waiting for the ferry over the Bojana, one of the men, a mountaineer in charge of one of the pack-horses, met an enemy who used some threats towards him. 'All right,' said the man, who for a wonder carried no arms, 'you can kill me if you like, as I am unarmed, but if you do, 2,000 of my clan will come and have their revenge.'

There was no killing that day, and we pursued our journey in peace, arriving at the same village from which we had been turned away, in our search for Pelicans, by the three armed men.

My very first day's work was brought to an abrupt close by a repetition of the same thing.

Again three men with rifles swooped down on us, one of them also provided with a length of rope, with which they actually commenced tying up one of my men. But nothing came of it except that again we were escorted back to our boat in a sort of informal arrest. The men, it seemed, were *gens d'armes*, though wearing no uniform. In fact, for all intents and purposes, they are murderers and banditti. Among them was the same ruffian who had pointed his rifle at me on my previous visit. I saw a good deal of this man later, and at the little *han* outside the guard-house across the frontier he would sit cross-legged on the table and make cigarettes for me, and in his company I have drunk many cups of coffee. He boasted of having shot eighteen men, and I haven't the slightest doubt he would shoot anybody he was paid to kill without any scruples—and his price would not be so very expensive either. A couple of *medjidiehs*, perhaps, at four shillings each!

He was told off to accompany me afterwards to see I did no mischief, for I telegraphed to the British Consul at Scutari to ask the Governor-General to send orders to the people here not to molest me. Rather to my surprise he did so. It is true that he had promised to assist me to the utmost of his power when I had called on him with my credentials, and he had besides received

instructions from Constantinople to do so. But promises in Turkey are not always meant to be kept.

The way this man performed his duty was funny. All I had to do was to provide my boatmen with a sufficiency of rum. I was then quite free to do what I liked—I could have surveyed the whole place, or done anything else, while he was imbibing rum out of the bottle. When at the end of the day we left him at the landing-place opposite his guard-house, he was always exceedingly drunk, waving in farewell a big blue cotton umbrella in one hand, and his loaded rifle in the other. I was always very glad to see the last of him, for he used in his drunken way to point his rifle at any of us, and in the state he was in an accidental touch of the trigger was not by any means an unlikely thing to happen.

Before he used to come with me his officer accompanied our party one day. A very smart, good-looking man he was too, and spoke a little French.

But he was no more efficient in watching me than his subordinate. We had gone some distance up the river to enlist the services of a family of Albanian mountaineers in exploring some submerged forests which looked promising, but on arrival at their house so much time was taken up in the duties of hospitality that I thought I should never

get away to do any work. We were ushered inside, of course, where we all squatted round the fire while the usual coffee was made, then cigarettes, *raki*, and cream cheese were handed round. We were a large party, and the family was a large one : two brothers, apparently, with their wives and innumerable children, and an old woman, possibly the mother, all living together in a big basket, for the house was entirely made of wicker-work ; inside and out, partitions, cupboards, sleeping-bunks, and every part was made of osiers, or willow twigs, roughly matted together, so there was plenty of ventilation, and a free outlet for the smoke.

As soon as I could I escaped outside, and, accompanied by two boys and one of the men, armed with a first-rate magazine carbine, went in search of the *Velika bijella charplya* (Great White Heron). The bird had been described to them, and the local name used, and they professed their ability to take me to a nest. Off we went, nearly waist-deep in water for about an hour, when they conducted me with great pride to the nest of a Hooded Crow!

The four skinny, ungainly-looking little Crows which were the inhabitants of this nest seemed to wear a grin of derision on their ugly faces as I looked at them, and I felt inclined to wring their necks. But it was no use being angry ; the people had done their best according to their limited

ability, so I had to make the best of it. We waded altogether for three or four hours and found nothing more. The Turkish police officer meanwhile had been reclining at his ease drinking *raki*, and when I returned, sopping wet and very tired and hungry, he was more than 'half seas over.' With his boots off and his uniform unbuttoned he looked a very disreputable and dissipated Turk. By this time they had prepared a dinner for us all, to which we did full justice, though I have to this moment a vivid recollection of the nastiness of the chief dish, a sort of maize porridge, very thick and stodgy.

The people and the house generally had such a wild look about them that I set up the camera for a family group, after which I invited them to look through the camera at one another. It was a funny sight to see about seven or eight women, children and boys, all trying to get their heads under the focusing-cloth together, while a dirty-looking brat would be doing his best to look in at the lens at the same time. It was a hard task to keep them in order, and give them each a chance of seeing something. No doubt this was the first time any of them had ever seen such a thing, and they evidently took me for something like a magician.

I had announced a reward of a napoleon for any news of a veritable nest of White Herons, and several times made expeditions to more or less



ALBANIAN FAMILY

distant localities on false information. Once they took me to an Albanian village, only to find a Stork's nest, and were very aggrieved because I refused to pay. After all, there was a Stork's nest in the village, within 100 yards of where I was living, but I suppose the more distant one to them seemed better value for the money, and a better excuse to make me pay up.

At last, one day (May 27), after many disappointments such as I have described, and many failures, I succeeded in finding a nesting colony of *Ardea alba*. I had been wading all day searching several thick reed-beds. The day was a very hot one, and I was thoroughly exhausted and done up, so much so that several times I had been obliged to sit down in the water and rest on clumps of reeds. Hardly able to drag myself along, I was on my way slowly back to the boat where I had left wine and food, when suddenly the unmistakable grunting of breeding Herons attracted my attention. On firing my revolver up got several Common Herons, but with them were some Great White Herons. Fatigue, hunger, and thirst, were all forgotten, and I plunged again into the reeds with renewed strength. The water was waist-deep—sometimes over—but luckily the bottom was fairly firm. Each step required the exercise of my whole strength and weight to force a passage through the thick reeds. For over an hour

this went on, until at last a nest was found high up in the reeds, made like a Purple Heron's nest, in which were lying four pale-blue eggs.

But this alone was insufficient. I had seen Grey Herons rise from the reeds, and the eggs of the two species are so much alike that further identification was necessary, if only for my own satisfaction. Crouching in the reeds at a little distance I waited until a pair of veritable Great White Herons hovered over the nest, preparing to alight.

At last, after a whole month's search in Montenegro and Albania! Only those who have experienced the difficulties, uncertainties, and disappointments of such a search can sympathize with the relief I felt at having finally succeeded.

Then I went back to the boat for some much-needed refreshments, and received the compliments and congratulations of Djouraschkovitch, who confessed that he would have given up the search long ago as hopeless. During my absence he had found the beautiful nest of a Penduline Tit suspended from the extreme tip of a willow twig.

Back we went with the camera so as to lose no time in obtaining a photograph. Djouraschkovitch, being anxious to see the nest, accompanied me into the reeds. It will give some idea of the difficulty of birds'-nesting in these places when I say that for two hours we searched in vain for it, though I



HANGING NEST OF PENDULINE TIT

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thought I had left a plain track of broken reeds straight to the spot. But, no; we lost ourselves completely, and not only could we not find the nest, but we had considerable difficulty in finding our way out again.

When once we had entered the water the reeds towered over our heads to the height of six or eight feet, and it was impossible to tell in which direction we were going. High mountains were on three sides of us, but it was impossible to see them, or, in fact, to see anything more than a yard away.

We had to leave the nest for that day, and it was only after two hours' more hard work on the next day that we succeeded in finding it again. By that time one of the four eggs had hatched, and the other three were on the point of doing the same. It was only by a very prompt and rough surgical operation with my knife that I was able to save them.

Not far from this nest we then found more than a dozen nests of the Common Heron and the Great White Heron. Each of these contained young birds, the Common Herons nearly fledged, the White Herons in all stages, from a few days to a couple of weeks or more. There were no more eggs, so that I was only just in the nick of time to obtain any at all; another hour's delay and I should have been

too late. On being approached, the young Herons leave their nest and retire into the reeds, sometimes going to some distance, and returning when the danger has passed. On these occasions they pull themselves along with their feet—the toes of which have considerable grasping powers—by their mandibles, and by hitching their chins over the reeds, using the beak as a hook.

Both nests and eggs appeared to be smaller than those of *A. cinerea*. The nests were sometimes raised about two or three feet above the water, others were nearly flush. The birds themselves were quieter than *cinerea* or *purpurea*, and I only heard low croakings while waiting at the nests.

But they were exceedingly shy. In vain I tried every dodge and artifice I could think of. One day I spent hiding at a little distance with reeds tied all round my waist, with a long string on to the shutter of the camera. For hours I stood in the water thus hidden, swaying backwards and forwards in the wind like the other reeds, till I almost began to think I was a reed myself. But the birds either saw the hidden camera, or detected me through my disguise, and obstinately refused to alight.

Then I tried the electric camera, and this did go off several times. It was lucky, however, that I did not altogether trust to this plan, which has its advantages for very shy birds, but at the same time



YOUNG GREAT WHITE HERONS

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is very tricky and unreliable, for it turned out afterwards that for some reason or other all these exposures were failures.

Then I used an empty nest as a hiding-place. It was at a good height up, and, by burrowing a hole in the mud with my feet, so as to make it rather deeper, I found I could stand behind and partly under it and be pretty well hidden, and at the same time get a good, clear view of a likely nest opposite.

Here, then, I remained almost motionless for two entire days of ten hours each day, from eight o'clock in the morning until six o'clock in the evening. I had some food in my shoulder-bag, for my pockets were full of water, and munched hard-boiled eggs and dry bread when I was hungry. The only exercise I could take to keep the circulation going in my legs was working with my feet to deepen the hole I was standing in. The water was up to my waist, and to make things still more unpleasant, the leeches found out some holes in my breeches made by the reeds, and I was losing blood all the time; there were several also inside my boots.

I had started the search with a pair of wading-trousers. They were very old, however, and had seen much service in England, Scotland, Spain, Holland, and Denmark, and were nearly worn out when I started, and the reeds here had quite finished them some days ago. They were literally

cut to ribbons, and perfectly useless, having gashes in them over a foot long, so that I had to finish the work without them.

On the first of these two days the hen bird came to the nest, but in a very timid, hesitating manner, first of all not actually on the nest, but a little way behind it. She waited there a few minutes, and then flew off, as if she didn't like the look of things. An hour later she came again, but still on one side, and I made one exposure. Two hours after that I had another chance, after which she advanced right into the nest and fed the young like a Spoonbill, leaving before I could get another plate in.

The young ones were very disappointed, and so was I. Their note when they see their parents in the neighbourhood of the nest, and when they alight, sounds exactly like 'Be quick, be quick,' and in this I quite sympathized with them. I knew that the poor little beggars must be hungry; and so was I very hungry, and very wet, and very tired of standing there so long, and I was quite as anxious as they were for her to 'be quick.'

I was much annoyed by my men, two of whom were waiting at the edge of the water, talking loudly, and even singing, to pass the time, though I had particularly told them to be quiet. The next day I sent them back to the village in the boat, telling them to come for me in the evening. I thus had



GREAT WHITE HERON AND YOUNG (ARDEA ALBA)

the place entirely to myself. I ought to have done this before, for hardly had they left the place than the bird returned to the nest, standing up well in the middle as I had seen her the day before. I had made up my mind to be satisfied with no other position, but to keep on until I had secured it, so that I was pleased at having succeeded so early in the day. After that I had to wait two or three hours, as she seemed more timid than ever, and when she did come it was only to the back of the nest, where I could barely see her through the reeds. As her young ones couldn't get to her, she gradually forced her way through and stood in the nest, where I was able to photograph her several times.

The electric camera was also set at a neighbouring nest, and I found it had gone off at the end of the day. I had hidden it on what I had thought was an empty nest, but when I went to it I found a young Grey Heron, nearly fledged, sitting on it. For the bird to make the exposure I had stretched a fine green thread over the nest, so that on returning she would be bound to touch it.

These few photographs of the Great White Heron cost me no less than six days' hard work in three and a half feet of water, while I had spent a whole month in the search for a nest.

There were a good many Marsh Harriers about,

which seemed to pay much attention to this heronry. Many young birds had been devoured in the nests, but whether the Harriers had killed them first, or whether they had simply devoured the dead ones they found I cannot say. Eagles, too, were constantly seen flying over, also the Mediterranean Herring Gulls (*Larus cachinnans*). These birds were nesting not far off on a sandy stretch with occasional bushes and pools of water. There also was a large colony of Caspian Terns apparently nesting, although I could find no eggs. Norfolk Plovers were numerous, and I found two of their stone-coloured eggs after noticing the place from which a bird had risen. A few Pratincoles also frequented the same spot, and I picked up one day a broken egg-shell. Purple Herons were common, and daily a Bittern boomed close by. I could hear them booming every night, while a Scops Owl regularly uttered its curious cry from across the river, and sometimes a glimpse of one could be seen flying over the house. Little Owls also are common here; I have often seen them sitting on a house-roof in the broad sunshine in the middle of the towns and villages.

Bee-eaters were abundant, and were often seen sitting on the single telegraph wire which here crosses the river. One day we borrowed a spade and dug out a couple of holes in the level ground,

but though the burrows extended four feet in length there were no eggs.

Having at last finished with the Herons it was necessary to rush back to Dulcigno in order to catch the steamer. There is no time to spare, as if I missed it I should have to wait another week.

At the little inn in Dulcigno I had left one big box of luggage when I went to Scutari. At the last moment, with the horses at the door to take me to the Val de Noche landing-place, the landlord presented me with a bill charging rent of my room for the twenty days I had been away, on account of the box left in his charge. Of course I refused this demand and offered a napoleon in full payment of everything. But there was no time to argue, or I should have lost my passage, and I had to pay under protest.

Judge of my surprise when, on arrival at Antivari about three hours afterwards, I received a telegram that was waiting for me from Djouraschkovitch, which said, 'Autorité judiciaire vous envoie 34 courronnes que la patron de l'hôtel vous a fait illegalement payer.'

Three hours in which to bring an action, receive the money, and forward it by telegram in time to catch me at the next port strikes me as a smart bit of legal work, and a record for speed.

I was very glad of this money, for I was running

very short, and could not draw any more on my letter of credit until I reached Budapest. Without it I should certainly have stuck on the way, for as it was I only lasted out by going practically without anything to eat the last day, and arrived at my hotel in a penniless condition without enough money to pay for the cab.



ON VALENCZE SEE

IX

BIRDS'-NESTING IN HUNGARY

IN all the capitals where I carried introductions to the leading naturalists I met with a most cordial reception and the greatest possible kindness. And to the circle of ornithologists in Budapest I shall feel ever grateful for their cordiality and hospitality. I say *circle* advisedly, for they resemble more a family circle, every member of which sympathizes with the tastes and likings of the rest, and when a stranger of like mind arrives in their midst they vie with one another in entertaining him and helping him to the utmost of their ability.

Hungary, too, is a country of extreme interest to the ornithologist, although to the casual traveller no doubt it may appear not particularly likely or suitable for any large number of birds.

As a matter of opinion, without the opportunity of consulting statistics, I should say that the list of Hungarian birds would show that the country is second to none in Europe in the richness of its bird

fauna. Russia probably would show a larger number with its vast area, embracing as it does both the birds of Northern and Southern Europe with the overlapping of Asiatic and Eastern species ; but with that exception Hungary has few rivals. Nor is this surprising when its central position is considered, for this necessarily ensures its being in the path of the migrating hosts from north to south and vice versa every spring and autumn. There is also every diversity of feature within its boundaries, so that every class of bird can find a suitable habitat. The Danube runs the whole length of the country, and its many tributaries and almost impenetrable swamps are inhabited by countless numbers of marsh birds, waders, and water-fowl. There are also many remote lakes of large size where other birds of the same class, as well as a great diversity of smaller warblers, can find a safe refuge. Its woods and forests shelter many birds of prey, and in its mountains are still to be found the Griffon Vulture and other large raptors, and the vast plains are an attraction to the Bustards and similar ground birds.

Even in Budapest itself it is possible to see many most interesting forms of bird life. In the parks, and especially on the Margareten Island, there are Hoopoes, Golden Orioles, and Red-footed Falcons, besides hosts of Tits and Finches, which find protection and encouragement in the form of



NEST OF SPOTTED CRAKE (PORZANA MARUETTA)

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nesting-boxes in the spring and feeding-tables during the winter months.

Last February a Wall-Creeper (*Trichodroma muraria*) was seen daily on the rocks on the Buda side of the Danube, no doubt having been driven from its mountain home by the heavy snow then prevailing everywhere throughout Europe. The Danube was then almost blocked by great masses of ice floating down the turgid current, which was nearly up to the level of the embankments. On these blocks of ice were many Goosanders, Smews, and Red-throated Divers, and it was interesting in the extreme to be able to watch these birds in the middle of a large city.

Later in the year there were immense numbers of Sparrows roosting in the bushes in the squares. There must have been thousands of them, and when bed-time arrived the chattering was almost deafening.

And if birds are plentiful in Hungary, ornithologists and field observers are also numerous. There is even a Government department, or bureau, the Ungarische Ornithologische Centrale, established for the express purpose of determining the economic value of birds. Among other methods, the contents of the stomachs of the various birds are examined scientifically, and records kept of the proportion of insect, vegetable, or animal food devoured by them at different seasons of the year, and in different

localities. These records are properly tabulated and classified, so that authoritative reports are always available on the usefulness or otherwise of any bird.

Some such bureau in England would be very useful, and might with advantage be instituted by the Board of Agriculture. Any question then of a bird's alleged destructiveness to any crop could be authoritatively and officially answered.

The head of this bureau in Budapest is Herr Otto Hermann, whose striking and picturesque personality is well known to English naturalists. Dr. von Madarasz, the genial ornithologist of the museum, is also well known to all ornithologists. Here, too, I met Herr Cerva, the dealer and collector, and under his guidance, in company with Herr Schenk, from the Bureau, I made two memorable birds'-nesting expeditions, to Valencze See, and to a marsh at some distance from Budapest. Valencze See is a long, narrow lake, well provided with extensive reed-beds, and is one of the best known of the celebrated Hungarian bird resorts.

It is only a short distance from Budapest, and the railway station is close to the water, so that it is very easily reached. Permission, however, has to be obtained from the owner. From the little railway station platform I could see large flocks of birds on the water as soon as we stepped from the train, and



NEST OF BLACK-NECKED GREBE (*PODICEPS NIGRICOLLIS*)

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by the aid of my glass, a Goerz prism, could distinguish Little Grebes from the Black-necked Grebes (*Podiceps nigricollis*), much to the surprise of my companions; there were also Mallards, Pochards, Coots, and other similar birds in great numbers.

We were soon afloat with some boatmen, who have been employed by Cervia for years, and I was surprised to find them using the scientific names of the birds as if they were perfectly familiar with them. We had not proceeded very far when I saw a Black-necked Grebe sitting on its nest at a little distance, and pointed it out to the rest. This species was quite new to me, and I was naturally rather pleased at having found a nest, but the men proceeded on their way, saying we should soon see plenty more. Sure enough, we did see plenty more, and nearly always found them nesting in small colonies. The Black-necked Grebe appeared to be the predominant species, but with them was sometimes a single nest of the Little Grebe (*Podiceps minor*), or of the beautiful Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*). It was very late in the year (June 11), and the clutches were small and the eggs much incubated. None of the nests of *Podiceps nigricollis* contained more than three eggs, the majority only two. Like all Grebes' eggs which have been laid more than a few days, these were stained a dark mahogany brown from the feet of

the birds and the wet, rotting weeds of which the nests were composed, and with which the eggs were also covered.

Here I also heard for the first time in my experience the curious, reeling note of Savi's Warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*), which vanished from our Eastern counties more than fifty years ago, owing to the drainage and reclamation of the fens. It was in all probability never an abundant species with us, or it would not have disappeared so utterly and completely as it has done, for after all there are still remaining plenty of suitable and extensive reed-beds in Norfolk and elsewhere. It nests here more or less abundantly, but at this late date it was quite useless to expect to find eggs.

Larus ridibundus, the Black-headed Gull, was common, but I only picked out one clutch of well-marked eggs for the sake of having some from this locality.

Of the Pochard (*Anas ferina*) we found several nests. One of them held nine eggs, but another had evidently been recently discovered and looted by that incorrigible egg-sucker, the Marsh Harrier (*Circus æruginosus*). This fine-looking bird may be seen constantly all over Europe. At any rate wherever I have been I have always met with it frequently, gliding along with easy and buoyant flight over marsh and reed-bed and open country,



NEST OF WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN (*HYDROCHELIDON LEUCOPTERA*)

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never in forest districts, where it is quite out of place. It is very bold, and will approach shooters in the most impudent manner. Even if fired at and missed it will come again within shot directly afterwards; and it is curious how easy it is to miss a Marsh Harrier. Its vulnerable surface is, I suppose, small in comparison with its imposing spread of wing, which makes it look very much larger than it really is. During the nesting season they devour immense quantities of eggs and young birds. I have seen them, when picked up after being shot, so full of yolk and white of eggs that it has dribbled out of their beaks. But after the breeding season I am convinced that they do a certain amount of good by catching rats, mice, and other destructive rodents, and also probably a certain proportion of beetles, locusts and large insects.

The harsh note of the Great Reed Warbler was as usual in such places a very conspicuous feature, and slung between the upright stalks of the reeds were several nests. It is always a very late breeder. I had left it on the Montenegrin and Albanian frontier in May, not having yet commenced nesting operations. Here some of the eggs were incubated, but others we found quite fresh. They seem to wait until the reeds are grown to their full height before they begin to build their beautiful and interesting nests. (I have noticed the same thing

with the Small Reed Warbler, having found eggs as late as August, both in Norfolk and in Essex.) Several nests of the Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra*) were also found.

The next day we drove to the farther end of the lake, in a typical country wagon without springs, sitting on sacks filled with hay or straw, along a typical Hungarian road, sandy and very rough, and bordered the whole way with acacia-trees. Hay-making was in full swing, and working in the fields, vigorously swinging the scythe through the tall grass, were many women, clad in blue jackets and white skirts. But they are very big women, surely, in Hungary, and given to tobacco. There is one with a well-coloured clay pipe in full blast. And a beard! Why, they are men after all! Men in petticoats! They are really divided skirts, or very long and very, very wide linen drawers; but the effect is exactly that of a petticoat or skirt, and looks very incongruous, especially for men working in the fields. One can understand women desiring to emancipate themselves from the inconvenience of skirts and petticoats, but that men should go out of their way thus to hamper themselves is past all comprehension. The head-gear with this astonishing costume is a very hard-looking, broad-brimmed black felt hat.

Our boatmen on this second day were attired



NEST OF LITTLE BITTERN (*ARDETTA MINUTA*)

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in this petticoat costume, and perhaps it is not so out of place in a boat. On occasions it is even convenient, for wading it is very easy to pull up one's skirts, or trousers, shall we say? and wade deep without getting any garment wet. These men were equally as intelligent as those of the previous day, and knew exactly where to take me for any bird I desired.

The very first nest seen was one of the rare and local *Luscinia melanopogon*, built at the outside of a 'clump' of tall reeds. This nest was extremely long and compressed between the close reed-stalks about a foot from the water. The bird resembles a very well-marked Sedge Warbler, but the markings about the head are nearly as conspicuous and well defined as those of a Whinchat. An attempt to photograph this bird was a failure, from the impossibility of hiding either myself or the camera; but during the time I was waiting I had plenty of opportunity to see it at close quarters, as it crept about the clump of reeds in the near neighbourhood of the nest, and to hear its peculiar note.

There were plenty of Bearded Tits (*Panurus biarmicus*), and my experiences with these birds in the Norfolk Broads, their last stronghold in England, enabled me to find several nests where one would naturally expect to find them, among the rough tangle of dead stuff at the bottom of the floating reed

islands just above the water. But there were also several nests built underneath a rough sort of pent-house formed by tying a handful of growing reeds in a knot and bending down the upper part. Whether these had been made by the boatmen purposely for the Bearded Tits, or for some other purpose, and taken advantage of by the birds, I do not know and could not ascertain, for I was unable to talk to my boatmen at all, except just the Latin names of the birds. Even with Herr Cerva, who was in another boat, I could only speak with difficulty, his knowledge of English being limited, and eked out with the constant use of a small dictionary. But one thing was certain, the men always looked under each of these rough shelters for nests, and very often with success.

I hardly expected to find the Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*) nesting at such a late date, but on mentioning the name to my man he at once took me to a small colony in an out-of-the-way corner. The eggs were naturally much incubated, and no nest held more than three eggs, most of them only two, being probably second layings.

On the way thither we passed two nests of the Little Bittern (*Ardetta minuta*). The first had been known of before by my boatman, but since his last visit to the spot it had been looted by a Marsh Harrier, and the broken egg-shells were strewed



NEST OF LITTLE BITTERN (*ARDETTA MINUTA*)

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LITTLE BITTERN (*ARDETTA MINUTA*)

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about the disordered nest. The second was found by myself, for, thinking that the men were keeping too much to the narrow, navigable channels, and seemed very averse to getting their feet wet, I stopped my boat at a likely-looking place and waded through the tall reeds. I had not gone very far before I was waist-deep in mud and water, the water being very deep in this lake and the bottom very uneven, but I soon found another nest of *Ardetta minuta* containing five eggs, which proved to be much incubated. The nest was very small and slight, just a collection of small, dead reed-leaves and stems at the base of the growing reeds, on which the five white eggs were conspicuous enough.

The Little Bittern is one of the most extraordinary birds I know. It is quite small—not much more than a foot in length—and its colour is dark greenish-black and light buff, strongly contrasted, but it is firmly convinced that it is invisible. In this idea it is justified by results—and this not by carrying fern-seed, or the invisible cap of fairyland, but simply by faith in its own power of immovability. When approached it will grasp the surrounding reeds with its very prehensile toes and point its yellowish beak straight up in the air. The long, compressed body, always kept facing the intruder, is so exactly like a dead reed-stem as to escape notice from all but

the most keen-sighted observer. The dark back also much resembles the hard black shadows among the reed stems in the bright sun. Such faith has the bird in this extraordinary device that it will often allow itself to be caught alive by the hand. I have, in fact, done so myself, and have read of many similar instances.

The country here can hardly be called picturesque. With the exception of the acacia-trees, always to be found in the villages, and frequently bordering the roadsides, there is hardly a tree to be seen. You may drive for hours over undulating sandy plains, with nothing to break the horizon line save an occasional belt of acacias in the distance, or the long lever of the old-fashioned well, around which stand innumerable numbers of the white, long-horned cattle, so characteristic of the Hungarian plains, with their attendant herdsmen either mounted or on foot, and sometimes groups of uncouth-looking buffaloes.

The Hungarian cattle have most formidable horns. A pair in the new Museum of Agriculture in Budapest measure across the span 2'35 metres.

This museum was only opened on the 8th of June, 1907, and it is a striking testimony to the extraordinary advance of the Hungarian nation. In fact, when one sees the beautiful city of Budapest and its many fine buildings it is almost impossible



NEST OF WATER-RAIL (*RALLUS AQUATICUS*)

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NEST OF LITTLE CRAKE (*PORZANA PARVA*)

to realize that only 250 years ago it was still in the paralyzing grip of the Turk. When the Turks left, the population of Budapest was 250, now it numbers 800,000, and the city is second to none in Europe in the beauty of its public buildings, its wide streets, and its evident prosperity.

For long almost exclusively a pastoral country, breeding horses and rearing cattle being the chief industry of its people, Hungary has recently realized the importance of agriculture, and her vast plains now produce great quantities of wheat, maize, roots, tobacco, and vines.

If the magnificent show of modern agricultural implements and specimens is a proof of the up-to-date and progressive state of things in rural Hungary, the models and implements in the ethnographical section show vividly the domestic occupations of the original inhabitants of the country—the primitive herdsmen, shepherds, and fishermen, the forerunners of the great Hungarian nation. Among other interesting objects one may see a series of models representing the evolution of the house. From the first rude wind-screen of reeds or bushes erected by primitive man as a protection against the elements, we can see the slow stages by which his posterity advanced towards civilization, until the four walls, and finally the roof, placed him in possession of a home. And in the country villages to-day

one sees the same type of house as these earliest buildings. No doubt they are larger and better furnished, but they are the same low, whitewashed and reed-thatched cottages, standing each by itself, and scattered irregularly on each side of the wide, sandy road.

Goose-keeping seems to be a universal village industry, judging from the multitudes of geese one meets with round the villages. Each flock is guarded by a child, who accompanies them everywhere, and sees that one hissing family does not get mixed up with another while grazing along the roadsides or disporting themselves in the village pond. On hot days these ponds are full of a mixed crowd of naked children, geese, and yellow goslings, all enjoying themselves hugely in the muddy water.

Under Herr Cerva's guidance I visited a distant marsh where we found many birds nesting of great interest to me. It was an extraordinary place; no stranger could have told that there was a marsh at all. It looked exactly like the surrounding country, being grown over with grass instead of the high reeds and water-plants generally found in marshy situations. Almost the first thing to be seen close to the roadside was a colony of Black Terns and the beautiful White-winged Black Terns (*Hydrochelidon leucoptera*) apparently flying and hovering over a field. But to reach the nests it was



WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN (HYDROCHELIDON LEUCOPTERA)



NEST OF SPOTTED CRAKE (PORZANA MARUETTA)

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necessary to wade knee-deep for some distance. The eggs of the latter species are generally somewhat greener in colour than those of the Black Tern, and, like them, boldly splashed with dark markings; but sometimes a clutch may be so like the allied species that it is necessary to identify the birds to enable one to be perfectly sure. It came on to rain heavily while I was fixing up the camera at the nest of a White-winged Black Tern, and though the bird came on twice in a short time I was somewhat doubtful about the results. However, fortunately they turned out better than I had expected.

A little farther on, in a clump of grass surrounded by water, was a Spotted Crake (*Porzana maruetta*) sitting on thirteen eggs. The bird itself was caught on the nest, and proved to be the male; and later we found another containing eleven eggs.

In another part, where the water was much deeper and the vegetation more marsh-like, was a nest of Water-rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) containing eight eggs, and one of the Little Crake (*Porzana parva*) with seven eggs. Big clutches seemed to be the fashion in this locality, as we afterwards took a nest of the Little Grebe containing the, to me, extraordinary number of seven eggs. On the drier ground was a solitary nest of Pratincole (*Glareola pratincola*) with three eggs.

In another direction, in a belt of small acacias, we found two nests of the Red-footed Falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), one of which contained young birds, and the other four eggs. In the same belt was the empty nest of a Lesser Grey Shrike, the owner of which anxiously watched our movements until we were at a safe distance.

Proceeding alone, under the guidance of a small boy who declared his knowledge of a Golden Oriole's nest, I was surprised to find it on a very small and slender acacia, at a height of about ten feet from the ground. So slender was this tree, that it could not support the weight of the boy, whom I sent up for the eggs, and I had to call him down again. I then cut down the tree with my knife, but after all, to my regret, the nest was empty. It was the first I had seen outside of a museum, and was a beautiful specimen of bird architecture. The hanging cradle, suspended between the fork of a branch, was supported by broad strips of flexible bark, and was composed to a great extent of pieces of white paper.

This was the last nest I saw in Hungary, for the lateness of the date (June 13) made it imperative for me to hurry on to Roumania before I lost the best of the season there. The fact was that my plan of campaign was much too comprehensive and ambitious. To work countries so far distant



NEST OF GOLDEN ORIOLE (ORIOLUS GALBULA)

from one another as Montenegro, Albania, Hungary and Roumania in one season was a great mistake.

Arriving as a stranger in a new country, unable to speak the language, it is simply impossible to begin work at once. Sometimes weeks have to be spent in interviewing officials, obtaining permission and information, engaging guides, and overcoming unexpected obstacles of every description, before one can even commence operations. Then as soon as one begins to understand the ways of the people, and to find out where to go, and how to set to work, it is necessary to move on, leaving many things which are not quite ready, or which are too remote, so as to be in time for something else in a distant country where the same difficulties have to be gone through again *de novo*.

If a country is worth working at all, one whole season is none too long for anything like a good result, and for the photographic naturalist a season in Hungary ought to be very productive of good and interesting results.

X

THE BALKANS REVISITED—1907

EARLY in 1907 I received another commission to revisit the same countries in Eastern Europe as the previous year, in order to search for the larger raptorial birds, to procure more eggs of *Pelecanus crispus* and *Ardea alba*, and if possible to discover a breeding-place of *Pelecanus onocrotalus* in the Dobrudscha, together with any other species I could find.

An early start was necessary, and accordingly I left England on the 2nd of February in the hope of being perhaps able to find a nesting-place of the rare Lammergeier (*Gypäetus barbatus*), which is now on the verge of extinction in Europe. A very early breeder, its nesting-places in the most remote mountain ranges are extremely difficult to reach before the young are hatched on account of the deep snow which prevails in the early parts of the year. If it were not for this it would in all probability have been extinct before now, for the habit of laying out of strychnined carcasses for wolves, by the shepherds

and herdsmen in Spain, and other mountainous countries, has resulted in the destruction of great numbers of these and other raptorial birds, and they are in consequence of extreme rarity. A few pairs may still perhaps linger in the most inaccessible of the Spanish sierras, and these, with a pair or two in the Carpathians, and in Bosnia and Greece, are now all that remain in Europe.

My first intention was to visit a certain range in the Carpathians where I had heard of its recent existence, but at the last moment news of the exceptional depth of snow, which rendered the locality absolutely inaccessible, made an alteration of plans necessary. I went therefore instead, first of all to Corfu, to discover, if possible, the whereabouts of a nest from which a young bird had been taken in the previous year, and which was now a captive at a small wine shop in that island. It was thought probable that it had been procured from the mountains on the mainland opposite, either in Albania or Greece.

The journey began badly. There was much snow everywhere, and it was certainly cold, but I think on the whole that travelling outside on the roof of the carriage would have been preferable to my experience inside. The German idea of comfort when travelling apparently is to shut carefully all the windows and ventilators, to turn the steam-heating apparatus full on, and to stew in their own juice.

As my carriage was very full, and everybody smoked incessantly the thin and very rank cigars so popular in the Fatherland, I was very nearly poisoned with the foul atmosphere, reeking with vile tobacco and bottled-up Germans. Then, either when driving through Vienna, or at Budapest on my way to the hotel in an open cab I must have taken a bad chill. At any rate I felt so ill that I had to go straight to bed, and remained there about twenty-four hours before I felt equal to going to see my friends at the museum and the Ornithological Bureau.

Though I was anxious to start again as soon as I could, it was impossible to escape their hospitality, and we all met one day at the Zoo restaurant for a friendly dinner, at which I was the guest, and afterwards went over the gardens. These are not worthy of Budapest. In fact, instead of the restaurant being a necessary adjunct to the Zoo, this is merely a side attraction of the restaurant. The animals are badly housed, and not too well looked after.

This year the chief attraction was the lion's cage, where were to be seen two little lion cubs as playful as kittens, and to all appearance perfectly strong and healthy. There was a Lammergeier in good plumage, and one or two other interesting things; but as a zoological gardens it is the worst I have yet seen, even worse than at Lisbon.

After these festivities I pushed on for Trieste and

just caught the direct steamer to Durazzo. At this time of year there were no passengers, and I had the whole passenger accommodation of the steamer and the staff of stewards to myself. Even in the summer, when the boats are full, the Austrian-Lloyd service to the Dalmatian and Albanian ports does not pay. They confess to a very heavy loss, but are obliged to keep it up to earn the Government subsidy. It is all a part of the Austrian policy to keep up the Austrian influence, and to push Austrian trade in the Adriatic.

On February 10, in the morning, I found myself once more in Durazzo harbour, and presently landed on the rickety little wooden pier. Dreading the custom-house after my experience last year, I sent one of the boatmen with my card to the Baron, and waited a short time with my luggage outside. Marco, the kavass, soon appeared, the Baron being engaged, and we had the things carried in.

The photographic things were not noticed this time, but they soon discovered a bandolier of cartridges which put them on the right scent, and the gun and rifle were quickly unearthed, though I had taken them to pieces, packing the stocks and barrels separately. Then a box of revolver cartridges was found, and I was asked for the revolver. As it happened I had a revolver in my pocket and a single Smith & Wesson in my luggage, both of the same

calibre, so I gave up the single barrel and stuck to the revolver. A walking-stick collecting gun which I had in my hand was not recognized, and consequently escaped ; but all the other weapons and a number of cartridges were confiscated in spite of all I could say or do.

Baron B—— took me up to the Consulate for breakfast and introduced me to the Baroness his mother, and to his sister, who were staying with him for a short visit on their way back from Corfu. But he advised me to proceed at once by the same steamer to Corfu to investigate the Lammergeier, and return to Durazzo later. If I had known this before I need not have landed my luggage at all, and so should have saved a lot of bother. For the Customs officials positively refused to restore the guns, although I was leaving the country, and I was obliged to leave them in their clutches, and proceed to Corfu without them.

Baron B——, however, promised to do his best to effect their release, and I lost no time in writing to the British Consul in Scutari, whom I met last year, and to the Embassy at Constantinople. And on arrival at Corfu my first step was to interview there the British Consul, who took me to see the Turkish Consul.

All this combined influence brought to bear on the Turkish Customs was not without its due effect,

for I presently heard from B—— that the gun, rifle, pistol and cartridges had been duly delivered to him, and that he was sending them on by steamer. This was good news, though I did not want them delivered to me at Corfu in case of fresh troubles with the Greek Customs, so arranged to have them kept on board the steamer while she went on to finish her round at Constantinople and return, by which time I expected to be able to leave again for Durazzo.

The Lammergeier I had heard about was found without any difficulty at a wine shop at the little village of Achilleon, where the late Empress of Austria had a palace which has been recently purchased by the German Emperor. It was still in immature plumage, as was to be expected, seeing that it was only taken from the nest the year before. This nest, I was told, was in the Greek mountains on the mainland to the southwards. But the idea I had had of going there was abandoned. The winter had been of quite exceptional severity, and the mountain ranges of Europe generally were quite impassable with deep snow. From the island we could see the snowy summits of the Albanian mountains gleaming opposite, and I heard from some of the English sportsmen who make Corfu their headquarters for Woodcock and Wild Boar shooting expeditions in Albania that there was quite sixteen feet of snow in the mountains, and that the forests

which clothed the lower slopes were completely covered. Under these circumstances, especially as I was still far from well, I considered it wise to give up the idea. Success even under the most favourable circumstances must necessarily be extremely uncertain; the expense would be considerable, and if I knocked up completely from exposure and hardship I might be obliged to abandon the whole expedition and return home without accomplishing anything in return for the outlay, which would be incurred for nothing.

In Corfu itself there is very little to attract or interest the naturalist. Birds are few and far between, and during my short visit I saw many peasants parading their fields armed with rickety-looking guns with which they fired at every living thing they could see.

In a creek which nearly bisects the island at the back of the town, I found a good many Pygmy Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*). When I first saw them they were resting on some stakes, in the usual quaint Cormorant attitudes, drying their feathers, not far from a small fishing-house built in the water. Thither I repaired the next day with a camera, intent on a photograph, but found the distance too great. There were many Curlews feeding, also Mergansers and flocks of small Grebes, I think *Podiceps nigricollis*, but there was such a strong

glaze and ripple on the water that I couldn't make out the species with any certainty. Black-headed Gulls, some of which were already acquiring their nuptial plumage, were numerous.

In the fields near the town were a few birds. Great Tits and Blue Tits were noticeable on account of their bright colours; compared with our birds they looked positively brilliant. The Robin also was of the same familiar habits as at home. Black-birds, Chaffinches, and Wrens were also seen. White Wagtails were running over the ploughed land and also Yellow Wagtails; but whether these last were *Motacilla flava* or *rari* I am unable now to say. A solitary Magpie was the only one noticed, and in the distance I saw a yellowish-green bird flying which reminded me of *Picus viridis*; but the flight was direct and straight, not undulating like a Woodpecker. It alighted on the top of a tree, where I could see it perched through my glass; but the distance was too great for me to be able to determine the species. A Woodpecker would have alighted, not at the top, but lower down, nearer the bottom, and worked its way up to the top. If it had been a month later I should have put it down for a female, or young male, Golden Oriole, the plumage of which much resembles at a distance that of the Green Woodpecker.

This is not a very long or interesting list of Corfu

birds ; but I was only there a few days and made no long excursion into the island, which would no doubt repay a more careful search. But the weather was very bad, with heavy rain and cold winds nearly every day ; and I found it necessary to take things easy and take care of myself so as to be able to start work in earnest in Albania.

In spite, therefore, of the beautiful scenery, of which I had been able to see very little, I was very glad to leave Corfu, and to return to the hospitable roof of the Consulate at Durazzo.

XI

THE BALKANS REVISITED : ALBANIA

ON returning to Durazzo I had again to face the vexations of the custom-house. It will, perhaps, hardly be believed, but the gun, rifle, pistol, and cartridges which had been seized before and returned barely a week ago were again confiscated. Not only that, but they refused to release *any* of my luggage until the next day. I wanted particularly one portmanteau to enable me to dress for dinner; but although it had been opened and shown to contain nothing but clothes they obstinately refused to give it up. Three times the kavass went to demand it in vain, and it was only obtained at last by the urgent representations of the dragoman attached to the Austrian Consulate, and then too late to be of any use, and I had to appear at dinner in knickerbockers.

Once more I had to invoke the assistance of the British Consul at Scutari, and the Embassy at Constantinople. They must have been very sick of me and my guns; but finally a telegram was

received by my friends at the custom-house which compelled them, *no lens volens*, to disgorge, and they did so, but with a very bad grace. I have no doubt they thought they had made a good haul.

But all this took some time to accomplish; and while I was waiting for a reply a call was made on the governor—a new one since I was here last year—and I was formally presented and introduced by B——. He was, of course, politeness itself, and after the usual coffee and cigarettes I was introduced by his Excellency to the head of the *gens d'armes*, who there and then received special instructions to look after my protection and furnish me with guards whenever I wanted to make any expedition into the surrounding country. At the same time profuse promises were made for the return of my weapons; but if it had not been for the influence I had brought to bear on the authorities, I have more than a strong suspicion that I should never have seen my things again. It came to light, moreover, that by a treaty or agreement between Turkey and Great Britain, which B—— luckily found among his papers, that I was within my rights in bringing weapons for sporting purposes into the country for my own use, although otherwise the importation of arms is strictly forbidden.

As for the offer of guards, B—— thought it advisable, as a matter of policy, and not to offend

the authorities, that I should avail myself of their services from time to time. Last year the then governor had protested at my riding about the country as I did, and declared it was not safe. As a matter of fact I was a good deal safer with Marco riding behind with a magazine rifle, and a revolver in his belt, without counting my own rifle and revolver, than under the safe conduct of his men. Not that they would dare to do anything to harm a foreigner, especially an Englishman; but they are not above robbing the country women of their few ornaments when they meet them alone, and otherwise acting more like brigands than police.

So one day when I wanted to have a little shooting in the lagoon, application was made for a man to accompany me. For his services, and for acting as retriever, wading into the lagoon to pick up the birds I shot, I paid rather less than eighteenpence, with which he was perfectly satisfied. His uniform was completely in rags, and on his feet he had pink-and-white striped socks and heelless slippers, hardly the footgear one would choose for the thick adhesive mud and shallow pools through which we had to go. Of course I could only communicate with signs, but he was very willing and civil. On our way back I met with a good many Snipe, but it was getting late, and I found it impossible to see them, as they dodged round the tall clumps of rushes and settled

again before I could shoot. The bag in consequence was light when we returned.

There was a sporting family of Albanians higher up the lagoon whom we used to employ on duck-shooting expeditions as boatmen and beaters. But the boats here are of very primitive construction, merely rude dug-out canoes, cracked with the heat of the sun, and exceedingly ancient. On one occasion three of these canoes lashed together failed to support the weight of B——, myself, and the man who was to paddle us in search of Pelicans. The water came over the top at such a rate that it was evidently impossible to proceed in such unseaworthy craft, and we had to land and devote our attention to Woodcock on the hillsides instead of the water-fowl and Pelicans.

Talking of Woodcock reminds me of a beautiful cream-coloured variety with a few pale-brown markings which had been given me on arrival by B——. It had been shot some days before, and was unfortunately in a very tender state when I got it; and a Woodcock, especially when fat, is at all times a very difficult bird to skin. However, I made a fairly good specimen of it considering that the feathers were beginning to come out when I took it in hand.

Later we succeeded in procuring some canoes able to float us, and had some enjoyable days in



DALMATIAN PELICANS (PELECANUS CRISTUS)

the lagoon after the duck. B—— used to lie up among the herbage on one island, and I would do the same on another at a little distance; while the man would paddle round and disturb the ducks, putting up the flocks as soon as they had congregated together. But the pace the Pintails, Teal, Wigeon and other ducks would pass our stands was astonishing. Sometimes a falling duck or two would splash into the water in reply to our fire; sometimes a cripple would require another cartridge to stop it; but on the whole the weight of the bag would be wofully light in comparison with the expenditure of cartridges. Once I remember bagging five birds with six cartridges, but as a rule the results were far less satisfactory; and when the man returning from his long round to pick us up at the end of the day found me empty-handed, as once happened, I felt rather small.

The fact was that I hadn't fired a shot-gun for nearly thirty years, until last year, and then only for collecting purposes, when sitting shots are the rule; and I was very much out of practice. I had had plenty of rifle-shooting at a target, but that, I am convinced, spoils anybody for shooting flying.

But if I had little to show on some of these occasions there was generally a goodly lot of duck to be picked up round B——'s island, for he was

a good shot. He was also the most enthusiastic sportsman I have ever met, and would cheerfully go through any fatigue and discomfort for the sake of a little shooting. The enjoyment he would get out of these rough days on the lagoon was quite infectious, and he was quite as enthusiastic in watching and observing birds, and would spend hours in the reed-beds noting the intervals of time in the booming of the Bitterns, and trying to watch them at close quarters. He did succeed in finding a nest with four eggs. Unfortunately this was after I had left, for it is a nest I have never yet been lucky enough to see, and a photograph of a Bittern's nest is, as far as I know, not yet an accomplished fact.

He was also much interested in archæology, and possessed a fine collection of coins and objects of art. The place is full of remains of Greek sculpture, and as he was known to be a buyer, the treasure-trove of the neighbourhood was certain sooner or later to be offered to him. A beautiful female head in marble, and an exquisite little torso, were among his choicest possessions. I have seen carved marble capitals used as door-steps to the rude huts of the peasants, and sticking out of the town wall; and they are frequently dug up in working the fields. The remains of an old Roman road across the lagoon are still to be seen, and on the hill commanding the town are the ruins of an ancient castle, either

Venetian or Byzantine. For here, as in the Balkans generally, various powers have held the place and given way to others. Durazzo itself has been in turn Greek, Roman, Venetian, Bulgarian, and Turkish. The whole of the Balkans is, in fact, one gigantic battlefield, and there can hardly be a square inch of soil which has not soaked up its quantum of human blood. For thousands of years Romans, Greeks, Turks, Huns, Goths, Tartars, and Serbs have struggled and fought and died; and it is curious to reflect that before the Norman invasion of England there was a vast Bulgarian Empire governed by a Czar, whose realms included what are now Bosnia, Herzegovina, Dalmatia, Servia, Albania, and a goodly portion of Turkey and Greece.

But this ancient Bulgarian Empire fell, as did every Christian state south of the Danube, except Montenegro, into the all-devouring power of the Turk. They even attacked Vienna, and until comparatively recent times Budapest was a Turkish town. The petty jealousies of the various Christian sects could make no stand against the united strength of the followers of Mohammed.

Even to this day the bickerings and jealousy between the Greek and the Roman Catholic Churches, as well as the jealousy of one great power of another, all help to keep the Turk in

Europe. And it is the greatest reproach against England by the Balkan peoples that Turkey is solely able to remain by her influence in maintaining the *status quo*. There is no doubt that by rights the Turks should be driven out entirely, being as they are a retrograde power, utterly opposed to all progress and enlightenment.

The Pelicans seemed to be in smaller numbers than last year, but they were just as shy and watchful as ever. They drew the line at any approach nearer than 300 or 400 yards, even when we lay down flat in one of the small dug-out canoes, and were paddled slowly and cautiously towards them. It was hopeless to try to get within gunshot; and though one day I had several shots with my rifle, lying down in a wobbly canoe makes rifle-shooting very uncertain work at such a distance, and I never succeeded in hitting one of them, though they had some extremely narrow escapes.

We had planned to revisit the nesting colony by boat, intending to sail down the coast with tents, &c., and camp out again on the shores of the lagoon. When the day came, however, such a strong sirocco wind was blowing that the attempt by boat had to be abandoned, and we determined to ride as before. As the weather was still (March 13) very cold, we took my tent as well as B——'s, so that the men should also have some shelter at night.



LITTLE BITTERN (*ARDETTA MINUTA*)



PELICAN ON NEST (*PELECANUS CRISPUS*)

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We were quite a formidable party as we rode out in the morning. Marco, of course, followed us perched on top of the big pack-saddle, but as the horse we had hired for him was not up to the combined weight, I had presently to dismount, and to ride his groggy-looking beast, while my old friend the black, *Shaitan*, was allotted the heavy pack, plus Marco, under which he did the long day's journey over rough country with perfect ease. Then there were three other pack-horses with the tents, each in charge of a man, the Baron and myself, and two suwarries; mounted zaptiehs or *gens d'armes*, with their rifles and bayonets. These we engaged ostensibly for our protection, but really so as to guard against the possibility of the natives getting into trouble with the local authorities for assisting us on the journey, and to show them that we were acting with the permission of the governor. For as last year the head-man of the village had been imprisoned for giving us hospitality for a night, the natives everywhere would naturally be very unwilling to assist us, and might even oppose our progress if they thought we were engaged in anything underhand or against the Government.

This time we struck out a new route which we imagined would be shorter, and hoped to do the whole journey in one day. As it happened, however, the advantage we had gained in actual distance

was lost by the absence of a ferry or ford over the river we had to pass, which we had expected to find lower down nearer the mouth. We found there no signs of any ferry, and from inquiries made among the few people we met on the way it turned out that we should have to ride some distance up the river to reach the ferry we had used last year, which was the only one. We therefore halted at a house close to the extensive ruins of an old Turkish castle, on whose broken walls and crumbling battlements were thousands of Jackdaws, now the only inhabitants of what at one time must have been an important stronghold.

We were as usual most hospitably received, and regaled with cigarettes, coffee, and *raki*, while they killed and got ready a turkey for our dinner, and prepared sundry weird concoctions in the shape of sweets. Just before the actual dinner was served they brought us the wings, which had been pulled or broken off and roasted.

In the morning we started off again for the ferry, and made for the pine-forest on the opposite side of the lagoon to where we camped last year, having in the meantime picked up our old friends the fishermen, to whom we had sent word to look out for us.

Our camp was pitched by midday under a pine-tree at the water's edge. From the tent-door we



PELICANS AT THEIR NESTS (PELECANUS CRISPUS)

could see the white groups of Pelicans clustered on their islands, and swimming about in the lagoon. Numerous Black-headed Gulls were industriously fishing just in front of us; while in the shallows were wading birds of various descriptions with Squacco Herons and occasional Little Egrets, and overhead were soaring Sea Eagles. These interesting glimpses of bird life before us, with the sombre depths of the pine-forests behind, made it an ideal camping-place for two enthusiastic ornithologists.

After a hasty meal we were soon under weigh in the dug-out canoes awaiting us, while our men were busy cutting firewood and getting things snug and shipshape for the night, and preparing a hot dinner ready for our return. On the way we shot a Green-shank, and saw a fine adult Sea Eagle knock over a Black-headed Gull, which it left behind for us to pick up.

The three islands used by the Pelicans were covered with nests. B—— took the trouble to count them, and made out 250 nests with eggs. Six nests held clutches of three eggs, the rest only two. There were already many freshly hatched young birds, and the eggs without exception were much incubated. They must therefore lay very early in the year, early in February or thereabouts; and the fresh eggs taken by us in May of the previous year must

have been second clutches. This is just what we expected, for in May we found young birds almost as big as their parents ; and others of all ages and sizes. Having picked out some good clutches of eggs, the cleanest we could find in the hope of their being less incubated than the others, we returned to our camp to find everything fixed up comfortably. The men had made for themselves a high wind-screen of pine branches, and built an enormous fire for cooking and to keep themselves warm during the night. To keep the fire going they had piled up a great stack of resinous pine-boughs as big as a haystack.

Presently Marco served us up a most luxurious dinner. The first course consisted of roast leg of lamb cooked to perfection, followed by tinned apricots, after which came Turkish coffee and cigarettes. The coffee, I learnt, was made by one of our su-warries, whose only luggage for four days consisted of an old blanket, a coffee-mill, and a bag of roasted coffee berries. It was exquisite. After such a dinner we felt at peace with all mankind, and enjoyed a short rest before turning in. It was bitterly cold at night in spite of the big fire outside, everything being frozen in the morning, much ice forming on all the puddles. But in spite of the cold the men elected not to put up my double-roofed tent, merely using it as a comprehensive blanket wherewith to cover themselves as they lay round their fire



PELICANS AT THEIR TOILET

and I dare say they found it warmer. I slept comfortably enough in my bag; but B—— complained of the cold, and the next night used his heavy fur-coat as a counterpane. But the coldest part of all was the wash in the open in the morning, stripped to the waist with a bitter wind blowing enough to cut the flesh off one's bones. Honestly I should have preferred my ablutions inside; but as the Baron started outside I followed suit, as it would never have done for an Englishman to funk cold water. The second morning, however, he was less exacting, somewhat to my relief. As for our men, I don't suppose they washed at all.

The eggs which we had taken the previous day proved to be a tough job. They were hard sat on, so much so that I spent the whole day over them, while B—— went off for some more and to shoot a Pelican or two for me. On his return with a few eggs and a splendid adult male *Pelecanus crispus*, we both set to work, one at each side of the india-rubber basin, alternately blowing for all we were worth and hauling out young Pelicans with scissors and hooked wires. It was a most unpleasant proceeding snipping them into pieces inside the eggs with fine-pointed scissors, and then hunting and feeling for the fragments, and dragging them very cautiously for fear of bursting open the shells, cutting off the pieces outside when we came to a bit of leg or a

head too big to pass through the hole. Luckily the shells were very big and hard, and I don't think we broke many—but the holes were necessarily rather large for some particular collectors. It was no good taking too many of these eggs, plentiful as they were, for we had to carry them back on horseback a long day's journey over a rough, roadless country. We therefore contented ourselves with as many as could be packed into my shoulder-bag, and I carried them back myself.

I should have much liked to spend a week exploring the pine-forests. No doubt the Sea Eagles, observed daily harrying the Coots and Gulls, must breed there, and perhaps other raptores, of which we saw a few (Buzzards, &c.), but we were unable to delay. It was positively B——'s last sporting experience in Albania, as he had been transferred to the United States. The steamer was due in less than a week, and his things were still unpacked, so we were obliged reluctantly to turn our backs on the Pelicans and all the possibilities of the forest.

But before we left the fishermen were set to work collecting pine-cones. The kernels of the seeds embedded in the big cones are much used for food, and are always included in the little dishes served before a Turkish dinner. It may be noted that 'kernels of the pine,' with pistachios, walnuts, hazelnuts, and almonds, are mentioned in the tales of the

Arabian Nights as included among the delicacies purchased by Amina and Zobeide when they entertained the porter, the three calendars, and the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid. The cones are roasted over a fire until they open, and the pips are then taken out and peeled. They resemble small peeled almonds, and have a pleasant nutty flavour. We found them very nice for dessert, and they go very well with a glass of sherry or Hungarian wine.

Returning we had to make a long *détour*, for our fishermen guides besought us to show ourselves at their village. It seemed that the inhabitants were very uneasy about our presence again in their neighbourhood, and were afraid of getting into trouble with the Turkish authorities, as last year the chief man had been imprisoned for helping us. They wanted to see with their own eyes our suwarries, so as to make sure that we were travelling with the knowledge of the pasha.

When we reached their village we found all the men assembled to meet us. We halted a few minutes to greet them and to pay off the fishermen who had served us so well. But we couldn't stay long, as we had a long day's ride before us, and I expect they were relieved to see the last of us.

We were very glad to find ourselves back at the Consulate, for the ride was a trying one on account of the bitter cold wind which was blowing. On the

way B—— borrowed my rifle for a shot at a Wild Goose he had spotted while riding through a plain near the salt-pans. The bullet I saw strike just over the bird, probably from his having over-estimated the distance.

The next few days were devoted to packing and getting ready for B——'s departure, and in skinning the Pelican and a Sea Eagle I had laid low with a rifle-bullet. A few days later a Griffon Vulture was obtained in the same way.

Before B—— left me to my own resources I had arranged to spend a week on the outskirts of a large forest, a few hours' ride along the farther side of the lagoon, with a friendly Albanian family whom I had met last year. It would be a good opportunity for trying to photograph some of the numerous Eagles and Vultures which had been seen by us daily on our rides abroad, and also would enable me to see something more of the home life and customs of the Albanians.

There were an extraordinary number of carcasses of animals lying about the country in every direction, which had been bogged in the deep mud. On several occasions I had ridden past Eagles quietly sitting on low trees and even in quite small bushes, and had determined not to leave the country without making an effort to attract them within reach of my camera.



EGYPTIAN VULTURES AND RAVENS

I had made one attempt at the carcase of a horse, but it was in a bad place: too near a frequented roadway, and by the time we heard of it it had been almost devoured. From the hollow cavity encircled by the rib-bones, now bare and white, flew a perfect cloud of Magpies and Hooded Crows, like a legion of evil spirits, while three or four savage dogs from some huts which were near tore at the bones and growled fiercely at one another. I had some difficulty in driving them off. A Golden Eagle sat on the top of a tree in a neighbouring field, and at least a dozen Ravens were assembled on another, hardly condescending to move or even to look round as we rode past, while four Griffons occupied a dead and withered stump in the borders of the forest. But I did no good here, it was altogether too near the houses, yet it seemed to prove that the birds were there and could be attracted by a carcase if I could find a suitable place provided with a hollow tree in which to hide, sufficiently remote to be out of the reach of the dogs, which would be certain to smell out anything within half a mile.

From my friends' house, which was on an elevated hill, there was a good view of the forest and country round. One evening, while examining the distance through my field-glass for any signs of birds or nests, I thought I could make out at a great distance a large nest on the summit of a tree. I even fancied

I could see the head of a bird in it. Pointing it out to one of the Albanians who was with me, he said it was a *Houtin*. This meant, I knew, an Eagle or Vulture; for, like the Spanish herdsmen, these men do not know there is any difference, and have but the one name for both birds. But he said that there was much water in the forest, and that it would be no easy thing to reach the spot. However, I made arrangements to go there the next morning under his guidance, and see for myself what it was. I thought that in all probability, judging from the size of the nest visible from such a great distance, that it would be that of a Black Vulture (*Vultur monachus*). For only a few days before I had seen one of these great birds circling round in company with some Griffons above the carcass of a donkey as we rode out from Durazzo.

We found it an hour's ride to reach this nest, and certainly there *was* much water in the forest. These Albanian forests are very weird-looking places, and most difficult to penetrate owing to the lack of roads, the deep mud, the water-logged state of everything, and the thorns. The trees are chiefly oak and very large, but in this part they had been lopped and burnt until they presented the most curious appearance. Their twisted branches and gaunt trunks divested of bark were of a ghastly dead-white, and the hollowed trunks were burnt and scorched with



UNEXPECTED VISITORS IN THE FOREST



'ONE OF THEM BROUGHT BACK MY HORSE'

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fire, looking as black as ink within. The fantastic shapes of these dead monsters of the forests, and the strange contrasts of black and white, gave them the resemblance of skeletons of gigantic beasts which had been tortured to death in an upright position, rather than the remains of trees.

When at last we reached the nest, which was placed on the top of a huge pollarded oak, a fine Sea Eagle flew off. Having set up the camera and made a screen of branches, the men and horses were sent back with instructions to come for me before dusk, leaving me quite alone in the depths of the forest—quite alone, that is, as far as I knew. But after I had been there about two hours, suddenly and noiselessly, without the slightest warning, two wild-looking Albanians, in ragged garments but armed to the teeth with rifles and revolvers, stepped out from behind the nearest tree. I had been intent on watching for the Eagle's return to her eyry, and had neither seen nor heard anything of their approach, so that I was completely taken by surprise.

My rifle was leaning against the tree within reach, and a loaded revolver was in my pocket, but though they looked two of the most unprepossessing ruffians I had seen for some time they made no hostile demonstration, they merely stood and looked at me silently as though they wondered what on earth I was up to. Well they might! I must say I also

wondered what *they* were up to, and I wasn't quite easy in my mind, for I knew that this forest, like all the forests in Northern Albania, was infested with robbers, and I let them see that I was well armed, and accosted them in Italian, which is very generally used here. However, they only answered in Albanian, which of course I was unable to understand. Here was a deadlock. However, I tried to show them by signs what I was about, and handed them a glass of wine from my flask. In return they rolled me a cigarette. After this exchange of civilities there was no fear of anything wrong, and after a short time I tried to get them to move on, as they were wasting my time. But they wouldn't budge, so as it was no good expecting the Eagle to come I determined to photograph my visitors instead, which seemed to amuse them mightily, though I don't suppose they had ever seen a camera before.

Finally they departed, after stopping three-quarters of an hour, and left me free to continue my work.

After some time the Eagle came as I was eating my lunch. Looking up I saw her sitting on a bough just over the nest, and was so taken by surprise that I didn't get the exposure made in time, and she must have seen me, for she never returned. There were two eggs in this nest, rather incubated.

To my great surprise, after returning to the house, while we were having dinner who should



SEA EAGLE RETURNING TO ITS NEST



NEST OF SEA EAGLE (*HALIAËTUS ALBICILLA*)

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come in but my two friends of the morning. After delivering up their weapons, which were hung up on the wall with the rest, they shared our meal—for here anybody passing looks in for a rest and something to eat as a matter of course—and afterwards we all slept round the fire together. I don't know if they were robbers or not, very probably they were, for I knew that my hosts had been in trouble recently for harbouring and assisting robbers. But living as they do on the outskirts of the forests they have to keep in with them for fear of losing their own cattle, or perhaps having a bullet put into them from behind a tree if they refuse hospitality when it is demanded. At the same time, if it comes to the ears of the authorities they are accused of being accomplices and imprisoned until a sufficient backsheesh is paid. Anyhow, the men, whether robbers or not, were very civil, and one of them accompanied me into the forest the following day, and brought back my horse for my return in the evening.

There was another nest of Sea Eagle not far away from the first, perhaps 300 yards, not more, which also held two eggs, both addled.

The number of addled eggs one finds in the nests of the great Raptores has been, as far as my experience goes, very large. I don't know how to account for it, unless it is that these birds in the

absence of enemies powerful enough to prey on them, and being but seldom molested by the inhabitants of these wild countries, live to a great age, in fact outlive their powers of reproduction. In the course of the time covered by this book, for example, I have met with the following addled eggs of raptorial birds: one Bonelli's Eagle's and two Griffon Vultures' in Spain, three Sea Eagles' in Albania, and one Black Vulture's in Roumania.

Between these two nests there was an open space among the trees, in which lay a dead donkey, recently eaten by Vultures. The bones were picked bare, and the earth around trampled with many feet, and covered with splashes of their dung. There was a big, hollow tree close at hand, in which I thought would be room to hide myself and the camera. Accordingly I had another dead donkey brought by bullock-cart from another part of the forest and deposited there, while one of the men enlarged with his axe the interior of the tree.

Here I took up my position early the next morning hoping for a photograph of Vultures, or perhaps one or other of the Eagles from the neighbouring nests. And here I spent four days of torture. The tree was after all far too small, in spite of all the axe work, and though I have spent long hours waiting for birds in many queer positions and uncomfortable attitudes, never in all my life have I



RAVEN AND MAGPIE ON A CARCASE

spent such weary hours as in this tight-fitting tree. I had to stand with my feet straddled out, and it was impossible to move either of them an inch without upsetting or disturbing the camera. The worst of it was that all my four days' discomfort was utterly wasted, for I never did one single photograph. The first day I could see in front of me, on a dead tree about fifty yards away, three Griffons. For hours they sat there quite motionless, as if dead donkeys were the last things in the world they wanted. Each moment I hoped they would descend, but the hole in front of my tree was too big to fill up closely enough for such keen-eyed birds, and finally they departed silently, no doubt having seen enough to arouse their suspicions. Magpies, Hooded Crows, and Ravens, all came to the donkey; but during the four days nothing else touched it during the hours of daylight. And at night it was devoured by jackals, who dragged it about and finally finished it.

There are a good number of these beasts in Albania. I often heard them howling at night while staying on the borders of the forest, and on one occasion I saw one run in front of us as we were riding back from our Pelican expedition. The two mounted guards were in front, and I was about third, as we rode in single file, so I was too far away to shoot. The leading guard unslung his rifle, but the beast vanished into some bushes and was no more seen.

We afterwards found another fallen hollow tree, much nearer the house, in fact, it was on one of the outlying fields worked by my hosts, and sufficiently far away to be out of the reach of dogs. The prostrate trunk was a mere shell, and after we had roofed in the back, which was open, with branches and straw, and cut a hole for the lens, there was plenty of room for me to crawl in, and sit comfortably, and even to lie down when I wanted a change. Under the hole we rigged up a rough shelf for the camera, which did away with any necessity for a tripod. In this comfortable hiding-place I spent six or seven days, with a succession of carcasses put down about twenty yards away. First of all I bought a sick cow, and had it brought in a bullock-cart and killed on the spot. This was cleared away to the bones the next day before I could get to the spot, but no doubt served to draw attention to the place, and act as ground-bait; after that I had two calves and another donkey.

Early one morning soon after I had taken up my quarters and arranged everything comfortably, I could hear my guests arriving at the banquet. At first I could see nothing; but the scratching of claws over my head, the croaks of Vultures, and the swish-swish of heavy wings all around, told me that they were beginning to assemble. I had only provided one round hole just large enough to take the lens, so that



KITES ON CARCASE (MILVUS REGALIS)

to see what was happening I had to look through the camera, which was rather a drawback. Very quickly a host of Griffon Vultures came into view, until there were about thirty of these huge birds, and one Black Vulture. The carcass was soon covered with a seething mass of hissing, grunting birds, tearing off great lumps of flesh, and gulping down entrails until in little more than an hour there was nothing left but the bones, when they flapped heavily away, one by one. I had been very busy all the time exposing plate after plate; I did altogether eighteen, but with no great hopes of success. Most unfortunately the morning was very dull, and dark, heavy clouds obscured the light; and presently it began to rain. I was afraid they would all be hopelessly under-exposed, and sure enough such was the case.

The night before, almost at dusk, I had seen the carcass move suddenly, evidently dragged by some powerful animal. I thought it must be a dog, and turned the camera a trifle, and saw a big Griffon tugging at the farther end. It was astonishing to see with what ease the bird could pull the carcass, that of a large calf. It was too dark to photograph, though I exposed two plates, and then put a bullet through it, as I wanted a skin. It was a fine female, with a spread of wing of 251 c.m.

(The Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) we shot was a male, and measured in length 188 c.m., and from

wing-tip to wing-tip 288 c.m., while a Sea Eagle (*Haliäetus albicilla*), measured 210 c.m. across the wings.)

It is often said that the first bird to arrive at a carcase is the Raven. Here the first arrival was invariably a Magpie. First of all the cry of a Magpie would be heard in the neighbouring bushes, and then with wavering flight Mag would flit across and alight on the carcase, soon to be followed by others until quite a number would be collected together. Then the Hooded Crows would begin to arrive. Presently the deep guttural croak of a Raven from the summit of some tree near at hand would tell me that one of these birds had made its appearance, and after it had satisfied itself that all was safe it would fly down and advance with long hops to the feast. Sometimes I had from six to a dozen of these birds in front of me at a time, and could often hear them on the tree-trunk within a few inches of my head. At times they made a curious bubbling kind of note, which might almost be called a song, accompanied with much puffing of the throat and long throat-feathers.

One day at the end of March I had another interesting experience in this same tree. After photographing several Magpies, Hoodies, and Ravens, two Kites (*Milvus regalis*) appeared together, and remained some little time, giving me several chances. Then an Egyptian Vulture came



SEA EAGLE ON CARCASE (HALIAETUS ALBICILLA)

into view of the focusing screen, and there were quickly nine of these handsome birds quarrelling and fighting over the calf. A single Griffon also came, but departed before I could get a plate in. Then suddenly appeared on the carcass a Sea Eagle, an immature bird.

All the Neophrons and Ravens retired to a respectful distance while his majesty dined. It was a splendid sight to see this noble-looking bird draw himself up and stare around him in disdain if any of the Vultures presumed to approach him too closely. Though he condescended to dine off carrion it was done in a most dignified manner, with none of the gulping and gobbling so characteristic of the Vultures.

The further use of this useful hiding-place was brought to an end by ploughing being commenced by my hosts in the field, and it was useless to expect Vultures, let alone any more Eagles, to come to it. The dogs also, which had followed the men, had by now found it out, and quickly finished it.

This family with whom I stayed, a self-invited guest for a week, treated me with the utmost kindness and courtesy. They were three brothers, Hilo, Filipo, and Drek Kanchay, and they all lived together with their wives and families, as is the custom here. In an unsettled country this patriarchal mode of living has its advantages, three families

being three times as strong as one single family. They were Christians, Roman Catholics, of a sort, as are most of the Albanians, though there are many members of the Greek Church and Mohammedans among them ; but the Mohammedan influence is evident in many of their ways and customs. The women, for instance, do not cover their faces, but are kept very much in the background. They are merely servants, and almost beasts of burden, cutting and carrying in firewood, bringing water from the well, besides doing all the household work. They never presume to eat with the men, at all events when there are guests, but cook and bring in the meal, eating what is left when and how they can afterwards. These people had lately built a new house, since my visit last year, of which they were very proud. It was quite one of the best I have seen among the country people, actually provided with a chimney, through which some at least of the smoke could escape, and with four glazed windows which would open and shut! As a rule the smoke escapes as best it can through the holes in the roof and walls, and to sit inside enveloped amid rolling clouds of wood-smoke is a very trying experience.

In this house lived the men and boys old enough to carry a rifle, while the women and children kept entirely to the old house, which was quite detached.



MY ALBANIAN HOSTS—THE FAT MAN IN MIDDLE IS A VISITOR



THEIR WOMENKIND AND CHILDREN

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But the new house, though so well built of stone with tiled roof, could only be entered through the stable; this is the usual fashion. In two-storied houses the cattle and horses live on the ground floor, and the people above. The smell can be imagined. The same arrangement generally prevails also in Montenegro.

The fire of logs burnt on the open hearth, round which were spread mats, with sheepskin rugs for guests, on which we all sat cross-legged or reclining against cushions. At night two thin mattresses were unrolled from the corner and spread one on each side of the fire on the earthen floor, one for me, the other for Hilo Kanchay, the elder brother, the rest lay down on the mats about the floor, just as they were. They never remove any of their clothes, even sleeping in their head-gear, the white Albanian fez; though the head-cloth which is wound round the fez over the head and under the chin is taken off on entering the house. It is not considered good form to step on the mats in boots. On approaching the fire, boots, or *opankis*—the raw-hide sandals generally worn—are taken off, and left at the edge ready to be resumed on rising.

An hour before the midday meal or the evening meal, bottles of *raki*, colourless spirit flavoured with aniseed, were brought out and passed round, and a plate of sour milk cheese, eaten in the fingers, placed

in the middle on the floor. Cigarettes made of excellent home-grown tobacco are smoked incessantly in long wooden tubes about two feet long. The *raki* luckily is not very strong, for it is passed round continually. As a guest I had a small flask and a liqueur-glass; the rest drank from the bottle. And though I drank as little as possible, it was impossible to avoid taking a little each time they raised their bottle to me with the Italian 'Viva,' or the Albanian 'Püt-mir.' Then I used to respond either 'Viva' or 'Bof-mir.' With two of the brothers I could speak pretty freely in Italian, as also with a sporting old chap called 'Zef,' who attached himself to my service. This last was a Scutarine, but I fancy had left Scutari for the good of his health somewhat suddenly about two years before.

At first I used to have my meals served separately, but after I had been with them a few days and had got to know them better, I hinted that I should prefer to eat with them; and I think that this made a good impression and gratified them all.

When dinner was ready the *raki* and cheese were put away, and a large round wooden table about four inches high brought in, while we all squatted round it, provided each with a long-handled wooden spoon. Then a large flat round basket was brought, in which was a big round loaf of maize bread, which just fitted it. This was cut up by the head of the



ALBANIAN INTERIOR: ENTERTAINING A GUEST

family after devoutly crossing himself, and a large slab placed in front of each person. Then a bowl of stewed meat was brought in and put in the middle of the table. Each man then dipped his spoon in that part of the central dish which was opposite to him, using the slab of bread as a plate, or fished out a piece of meat with the fingers. I used an aluminium plate out of my basket, and generally had first dip out of the dish. The cooking was really very good, the meat tender and well flavoured, and the home-made maize bread excellent. But during Lent they fast rigorously, living entirely on bread, cheese, and huge leeks, the biggest I have ever seen. In the morning before riding off into the forest I used to have a jug of hot buffalo milk, with bread broken into it. This buffalo milk is better and richer than any cow's milk, and the cheese from it is first-rate. These ungainly-looking animals are largely used for beasts of burden, ploughing, and for pulling the curious carts of the country with huge solid wheels about eight feet across, which make a slow and tedious progress of about two miles an hour, to the accompaniment of the most hideous and unearthly groanings and creakings. The first time I heard one of these carts I couldn't for the life of me imagine what was coming, for I could hear the noise long before I could see the cause of it.

The Albanians are a fine people, with many good qualities, and I never felt more comfortable and thoroughly at home in my life than while living with them and sharing in their usual mode of life. Hospitality is their chief virtue, and the person of a guest is sacred. They are tall men, good-looking, with piercing eyes and with remarkably small and well-shaped hands and feet. Always accustomed to carry arms and to use them, they have a free and independent carriage, and look a much superior race to the Turk. I would back an Albanian mountaineer to account for three Turkish soldiers any day. I cannot account for the reputation which the Turkish soldier undoubtedly has as a fighter. All I have seen in Albania were miserable specimens of humanity, in ragged uniforms, in down-at-heel boots, or else in top-boots, which would assuredly be left behind if they marched a mile over an average Albanian road, with sullen, brutal, stupid faces with no redeeming feature or sign of any life, or animation, or self-respect. If it were not for the Albanians being divided by three religions, each one jealous of the other two, I believe they could sweep the Turk from their country to-morrow, if they could be properly disciplined under a good leader of their own race—rather a big 'if,' I admit. Still, they have done it once, four hundred years ago, and they still remember and mourn for Scanderbeg, their



PLOUGHING WITH OXEN



PLOUGHING WITH BUFFALOES

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national hero, and remember how he freed them from the Turkish yoke.

Their code of honour may seem peculiar in our eyes, but such as it is they keep to it religiously, and, after all, there is much excuse for the custom of the vendetta among a proud and warlike people bereft of any semblance of law or order. They know there is no protection for life or property except that of their own right hands, and small blame to them if they exact a life for a life.

We had several impromptu shooting competitions, in which I could always beat all comers, partly, no doubt, owing to my being better armed than they were. Shooting one day at a hen's egg on the top of a stack fifty yards away, I only missed once out of five shots, whereas three of them only made one hit between them in about a dozen shots, though they all used a rest for the rifle. With my Greener .310 I could put a bullet through a reed-stem every time at twenty-five yards. With a Smith and Wesson pistol I could hit a mark the size of a shilling at twelve yards nearly every time; so that I acquired a reputation for a good shot, very useful in a country like Albania.

One day we had a visitor, a tall and handsome man, who had one arm crippled. They told me the history of the accident. It seemed that about twelve months before he had been attacked by two

men, and had received a Martini bullet through the arm, but in spite of the wound he had succeeded in killing both his assailants.

Another visitor we had once in the shape of a Turkish tramp on his way to Scutari. He arrived one wet afternoon perfectly plastered with mud from head to foot, and wet through. We were rather a large party that day, for several wayfarers had dropped in, among them two boys not more than sixteen and eighteen years old, both armed with Martini rifles. I was glad to see that these boys and the tramp were given a small table to themselves. I had been looking forward with apprehension to having to sit with him, for he was without exception the dirtiest human being I had ever seen, and scratched himself in a way that made me very uncomfortable. They must have noticed it, for he was allotted the stable to sleep in, a thing which had never happened during my stay; and after he had departed next morning I noticed that they took the mat on which he had sat outside and gave it a good shaking.

I was very glad of my indiarubber basin, and they got used to my washing myself. At first in these countries they do not think they are showing you proper respect in allowing you to do so, but hover around and try to pour water over your hands. Their own ablutions are very scanty. After sleeping

in all their clothes, including the fez, they pour a pint of water over the hands, and give their face a dab with their wet hands, still with the fez on, and that is all. At night they used to be exceedingly interested and amused in seeing me undress and wash, and get into my pyjamas and sleeping-bag for the night.

The log-fire, alongside of which we lay, was kept going all night, and I always slept like a top; but my companions—and I noticed the same thing in Montenegro—though in perfect health all day, coughed all night as though in the last stage of consumption, and spat all over the floor in the most disgusting fashion. Luckily they draw the line at spitting on the mats; this is never done.

On leaving these hospitable people I wanted to give them something, but it would never have done to have offered them money. The difficulty was got over by my giving one brother my watch, a cheap American 5s. one, and the elder one was immensely pleased with my spurs. He had borrowed them to ride into the town on his showy little grey stallion, and had evidently taken a great fancy to them, though, truth to say, I didn't like parting with such old friends, which have accompanied me into many parts of the world for at least thirty-five years. However, I had nothing which would have pleased him so much, and they had to go. As it happened I wanted them badly

the very same day, for riding back to the town a stubborn, hard-mouthed brute of a horse, it took fright at something and nearly backed over the edge of a raised causeway about three feet high. I only had a stick, and the more I belaboured the beast the more backward it went until we were half over. I believe we should have gone over if a man had not seized him by the bridle, and led him past the offending object. If I had had my spurs I should never have been in such an ignominious and undignified position, but could have given him a lesson he would have remembered for some time. Travelling on these expeditions, when one has to ride everything in the shape of a horse which happens to be available, spurs are a *sine qua non*, and I have found them invaluable many and many a time.

B——'s successor at the Consulate most kindly put me up for a day and night until the arrival of the steamer, otherwise I should have had to stay at the dirty little albergo in the town. I had already slept there for a week on first coming to Durazzo, as the rooms were all occupied at the Consulate. There is no better hotel, but the place stank most frightfully, and nothing short of starvation could have compelled me to have eaten a meal in such a dirty hole. There had been a venerable-looking old Turkish officer staying there, with whom I had promised to change rooms, as it appeared that my



STREET SCENE



HEAD OF A MOHAMMEDAN MONASTERY

Photo by Baron Bornemisza

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room had been promised to him first, and that it had been given to me in the idea that I should only want it for one night. However, I didn't have to give up my room after all, for the old man was shot dead in his room opposite mine before I could do so. I had seen him sitting on his bed when I came round to dress for dinner, and half-an-hour later we had word that he had been shot with a revolver twice in the throat by an Albanian whom he had offended. Afterwards it was given out that he had committed suicide from fear of arrest for embezzlement. Which was the true version I do not know.

Before I left Albania I had seen the first White Stork, Swallows, and Hoopoes on April 4.

XII

THE BALKANS REVISITED : MONTENEGRO

WHEN the steamer reached Dulcigno on April 6, 1907, there was, as usual, a strong sirocco wind blowing, and we had to proceed to Val de Noche.

I have always been unlucky on arriving and departing from this port, having only succeeded once in landing at Dulcigno itself, and I have never yet left from there. The sailors of Dulcigno have the reputation of being the best in the Adriatic, but all the same I have known the steamer to be signalled to go round when the wind and sea have been quite moderate; while I have boarded them at Durazzo, where the port is equally unprotected, in a far worse sea, without any great difficulty.

Being obliged to hire three horses to take my luggage every time adds considerably to the expense. Passengers, it is true, are but few and far between. Most travellers visiting Montenegro land at Cattaro and drive to Cetinje the capital, and so I suppose the passenger traffic is not worth considering; but the expense of carrying all goods and merchandise

over the bridle-paths across the mountains, where there is not even a road, must add very considerably to the cost of living, and I wonder that they have not, for their own sakes, before now contrived to make some sort of breakwater, so as to enable steamers to call at Dulcigno in all winds. Materials at any rate are abundant enough in the shape of rocks. According to the Montenegrin legend, when the Almighty was distributing stones over the earth, the bag burst and they all fell on to Montenegro.

As we rounded the point, a large boat pushed off from the shore, packed to the gunwale with an excited throng of emigrants leaving their native land for the States. Fusillades of revolver shots re-echoed from the rocky headlands, and were repeated again and again until they drew alongside the ship. These revolver shots form a very picturesque farewell, and one particularly appropriate to these warlike people; but they are not looked on with much favour by the ships' officers. And amid such a frantic crowd, all of whom are singing and shouting at the top of their voices, it is a wonder that accidents do not frequently happen, as man after man, half frenzied with excitement, draws his huge revolver from his waistband and discharges it into the air. However, I never heard of anybody being hurt on these occasions.

The waist of the steamer was soon packed with

these people and their poor belongings—bedding, brightly coloured chests, and rude bundles. They take a deck passage to Cattaro, from whence they are transhipped to New York. I heard they earned good wages in the States, and send money back to their relatives in Montenegro.

Though the passengers—mostly German and Austrian tourists—and the ship's officials might consider them savages, I knew from previous experience that, despite the shouting and bravado and flourish of revolvers, they carried sore hearts in their breasts at parting from their rugged birthplace, and that sad eyes will strain through the falling tears for the last sight of the ship as she fades away from the vision of those left behind on the shore.

But there was no time for sentiment. I could see several friendly faces as the boat drew near, and as soon as the Montenegrins had all surged on board I had my luggage stored away in it, while I inquired about horses to tranship it to the town. Nikola was there, smiling a welcome, and I was overwhelmed with offers of cigarettes from all and sundry. It was a very different arrival from that first one only twelve months before. Even the men in charge of the packhorses grinned at me delightedly, and kept rolling cigarettes to offer me as we clambered up the rocky terraces through the grey-green olive trees. I felt quite an *habitué* of the place, and the



L'ALBERGO ATHANASE (THE FRONT DOOR)

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little town of Dulcigno looked very familiar when we first sighted the bay from the summit of the hill, and began our descent through the narrow, stony lane.

However, I was sorry to find that the *Albergo Athanase*, which last year was on the shore, had removed to near the Custom House, whose portly official, revolver in belt, passed all my luggage with a wave of his hand, without even opening one of them.

Signora Draga, the *patrone*, and the fair, or rather the dark, *Melitza* gave me a hearty welcome, and appeared delighted to have me once more under their roof, where they allotted me a comfortable enough room. But I missed here the serenade of the waves on the beach, which used to lull me to sleep in the little balconied room in my old quarters. However, it was very pleasant thus returning to so many old acquaintances. I felt that I was among friends again, which is not a bad feeling to have in a foreign country.

But as soon as I had settled down and begun to get my belongings unpacked and in order, I missed my revolver. I knew I had had it on the boat while landing, because I had compared it with that belonging to a Montenegrin, who had one of a similar make, but now it couldn't be found anywhere. The Montenegrins have the reputation of being strictly honest—it is said, indeed, that you could leave a purse of gold on the highway for days and

nobody would touch it—but I feared that a revolver, especially one of a superior pattern, had been too great a temptation to these weapon-loving people, where everybody is required, nay ordered, to carry a revolver always, and to carry it loaded.

But I had done them an injustice ; about three days later the missing revolver was found stuck inside the mouth of a large sack which contained my tent. One of the boatmen must have picked it up and put it where he felt sure I should find it, without saying anything about it. I was very glad to see it again ; and when Melitza, who had found it, displayed it dramatically, I had to apologize inwardly for my doubts as to the national honesty.

I begin to see now why this town appears so Turkish in character. Of course it *is* Turkish, or rather was so up to thirty years ago, when it was a Turkish port and part of the province of Albania.

Before then Montenegro for several centuries had possessed no port nor any coast-line. At a still earlier date its coast extended from Ragusa to the mouth of the Drin, the capital being Skodra or Scutari ; but as the fortunes of war have fluctuated, so the dominions of the Prince of Montenegro have waxed or waned. But whether large or small, Montenegro has ever existed a free and independent State, owning no suzerainty to any other power.

At the collapse of the ancient Servian kingdom in



ALBANIANS

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the disastrous battle of Kossovo in 1389, the remnant of the conquered Serbs took refuge with their kinsfolk of Montenegro. And though at one time or another the Turks have overrun the whole of the Balkan peninsula as far as the Danube, and overthrown every other Christian kingdom, this small State, the smallest and the poorest of them all, has, through the centuries of strife and bloodshed, alone preserved her independence. Again and again have the Turkish hosts in overwhelming force surged forward to the attack, only to be repulsed, and sometimes annihilated, by the hardy and warlike men of the Black Mountain.

When at last, after having been cut off from the sea for generations, Cattaro and its famous gulf was captured, what had been gained by the sword was lost by diplomacy. The Powers interfered, and Cattaro was handed over to Austria. Then again, when Antivari and Dulcigno were taken by the present Prince, the Treaty of Berlin restored Dulcigno to Turkey, awarding to Montenegro the Albanian towns of Gusinje and Plava.

However, the turbulent inhabitants of these places flatly refused to become part of Montenegro, and finally Dulcigno was given back, in spite of the Turkish opposition. In fact, a Turkish army was advancing to the attack for the purpose of regaining possession, when the naval demonstration of the

combined fleets, led by England, off Dulcigno, led to a cessation of hostilities and confirmed the possession of Dulcigno to Montenegro. To this day the memory of Gladstone is venerated in Montenegro, and all Englishmen are treated with respect, so grateful are they for the timely service done them in their need.

I was probably the only Englishman in Montenegro, unless by chance there might have been one in Cetinje, and my fame had evidently spread far and wide. Hardly a day passed but that some queer visitor did not find his way up to my little room. Once I was accosted in very fair English by an Armenian priest who had been in England, on a begging expedition, of course. He showed me his collecting-book, in which figured the names of some of our bishops. To my great relief he didn't beg of me; to my surprise also, for I had met these priests before. In fact, one of them was a passenger in the steamer I had left quite recently, who was then actually on his way to England, and spoke of walking across Europe from Trieste to the English Channel as if it was the ordinary way of proceeding. He was rather downcast when I told him of the new Aliens Act, which would bar his landing in England unless he had a certain sum of money in his possession. He had heard nothing about it, but I thought it only fair to warn him; it would be much better



MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN



STREET SCENE

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than to have it unexpectedly sprung on him without any notice.

Djournaschkovitch, I heard, had become a member of Parliament, and was at Cetinje ; but my small knowledge of Italian had rendered me much more independent than I had been on my former visit to the country. My first visitor, before I had arrived a day, was a stalwart young Montenegrin, who came to offer me his services as guide and hunter as long as I should remain in Montenegro. As he had the reputation of being a great 'cacciatore,' I engaged him, and found him a first-rate fellow. The only drawback was that he knew no Italian, and I no Serb. However, I have worked under similar conditions so many times in different countries that I can generally get on without much difficulty.

Marco lived with his father and mother and brothers and sisters in a typical grey stone house on the hill-side at the back of the town.

The Montenegrin houses are very different in style from the Turkish, being gaunt and bare in the extreme—mere hollow stone blocks which look as if they had grown spontaneously from the rocks around. The shops in the bazaar and the houses in the main street are mostly Turkish, with heavy overhanging eaves and closely latticed windows, picturesque and dirty. They have the unmistakable Eastern and Mohammedan look about them,

thoroughly in keeping with the mysterious figures muffled in ungainly camel-hair cloaks and huge pointed hoods which issue from them in flapping heel-less slippers and white-stockinged feet.

Whether these bundles are beautiful as houris or hideous as the witch of Endor, it is impossible even to guess. You can see nothing, not even the eyes, the whole face being covered inside the cavernous hood with a coarsely-painted canvas screen.

Even this protection against being seen by an unbeliever does not appear to satisfy their modesty, religious scruples, or whatever it is that influences them; for they turn their backs on him in the street and show the greatest reluctance even to pass him.

To see one of these Mohammedan women travelling, especially on board a steamer, is an incongruous sight. One may be seen sometimes as a deck-passenger on the Adriatic steamers, where she looks woefully out of place, and still more so on the gangway embarking on or disembarking from a boat. She is terribly afraid of being seen, and equally afraid of falling overboard. Her baggy, shapeless clothing and ridiculous little heel-less slippers handicap her dreadfully, and her own folk take no notice of her, and never condescend to assist her in any way. If you forget her prejudices, and extend a helping hand, as I did once or twice without thinking, she won't see it, or you. As far



IN THE FISH-MARKET



MOHAMMEDAN DECK PASSENGERS

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as she is concerned you don't exist at all, and it is quite impossible to help her in any way. But if the Mohammedan woman is a more or less helpless and ridiculous object, the man, especially when seen at his prayers, is an impressive figure. One can't help realizing that his religion is very real to him—one to live for and, if necessary, to die for. At the appointed hour for prayer, wherever he may be, he goes through the long series of genuflexions and prostrations enjoined by the Koran, so perfectly absorbed in his devotions as to be oblivious to his surroundings, and it makes no difference to him whether he is in the midst of curious unbelievers, or in the circle of his own family and faith.

A large proportion of my visitors were beggars, and amongst their number was a certain ragged and dilapidated Turk whom I seemed fated to meet wherever I went. I had seen him first at Durazzo, where he used to turn up periodically and wheedle money out of B——. I had met him again at Scutari, where he had made himself useful to me in one or two small employments; again he had accosted me at Vir-pazar, and now one day he was ushered into my room in Dulcigno. I knew his errand perfectly well as soon as I saw him. He was always, according to his own account, starving, after just having walked from some distant town, generally from wherever I had seen him last. If

he hadn't always been very moderate in his wants I might have thought that he had followed me from place to place, but I could hardly suppose it worth anybody's while to walk fifty or a hundred miles for the chance of a crown or two. Here he wanted two crowns to make his way to Durazzo, I think. It was quite worth this small sum to be rid of him, for I knew that as long as he remained there he would waylay me every day. So I gave it to him and he departed, after trying to kiss my hand to show his gratitude.

Another more interesting visitor was an elderly Montenegrin. He told me he had collected birds for many years with Count Alléon of Constantinople, both in Turkey and in the Dobrudscha, and pressed me to visit him at his house in a neighbouring hill village, where he had bought a small farm. Accordingly Marco and I walked over one day, and were most hospitably received: too hospitably in one way, for he pressed his home-grown wine on us as if it was of the choicest vintage, and though it was like vinegar in its exceeding sourness, I had to drink it freely to avoid hurting his feelings. We had a good dinner, and slept there a night in the hope of getting a brace or two of Greek partridges in the morning, for he said there were a good many on the surrounding hill-sides. Unfortunately the next day was wet; and though we turned out and made an



YOUNG GREAT WHITE HERONS

attempt, the rain was so heavy and the wind of such piercing coldness that we gave it up and returned to his house empty-handed. We were waited upon during our stay by his wife and daughter-in-law—a handsome Albanian in a striking-looking scarlet costume. This man and his son spoke good French, as well as Italian, and had lived in Paris some years. It was curious to hear them lamenting the absence of theatres and picture-galleries. ‘Ah, Monsieur,’ said one of them, ‘c’est un pays sauvage,’ speaking of his native country. However, they seemed prosperous for Montenegrins, and were, I expect, contented enough; but the sight of a foreigner had served to awake memories of half-forgotten experiences.

There were not many birds to be seen in this barren and stony country. The most interesting, because it was new to my experience, was the Alpine Swift, *Cypselus melba*. There were fair numbers of them flying at tremendous speed, sweeping along the sides of the rocky valleys and mounting high up into the sky. Marovitch told me that he knew a place at some distance where they bred, but said that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to reach their eggs. I was glad to receive a specimen which Marco shot for me the next day at Val de Noche.

All this while I had not forgotten the chief object of my visit to Montenegro, which was to obtain

some more eggs of *Ardea alba*, the Great White Heron, which I had found breeding last year, but too late to get more than one clutch of eggs on the point of hatching. This time I had resolved to try another locality, not so remote and inaccessible, where I fully expected to find them.

But though this place was nearer, it was not so easy to reach as I anticipated, owing to the exceedingly strong current which fills the rivers from the snow melting on the mountain heights. Marco had borrowed a rude affair, which I suppose called itself a boat. It was a dinghy from one of the small coasters, and was, as usual, miserably equipped with one crooked oar and a broken paddle, one of which he wielded while I used the other. Only after great exertions were we able to force our tubby craft against the stream. Sometimes we hung at a ticklish corner, quite unable to stem the current, and if we relaxed our frantic exertions we were swept down for many yards. After about two hours of extremely hard work we finally reached the spot, and were delighted to find Great White Herons among the thick reeds. But at this date we could find no nests. Still, it was most satisfactory to find them on our first day's search, evidently thinking of nesting if they had not already actually begun to do so. The water was very deep, and we had to support each other as we struggled through the reeds.



YOUNG GREAT WHITE HERONS



NEST OF GREAT WHITE HERON (ARDEA ALBA)

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Hoopoes, of which I had seen the first on April 4, in Albania, were now to be seen daily, and I shot one this day (April 8), also a Little Owl (*Athene noctua*). We saw a large flock of Reeves, and stalked them successfully, after a long crawl on hands and knees, only to miss them all ignominiously. On the 15th of April we saw Whinchats and Pied Flycatchers, and shot a Black Chat. On this day we paid another visit to the White Heron locality, and found four nests, in one of which was one egg; there were also Purple and Common Herons, apparently nesting, or about to nest, in close proximity.

On the 15th of April I obtained a pair of Marsh Sandpipers (*Totanus stagnatilis*) and a female Lesser Kestrel. On the 22nd of April we visited again the Heron colony. The nest which had held one egg a week ago now had four, which I took. It was built very high up in the reeds, so much so that I had some difficulty in reaching the eggs from the deep water in which I stood. I also took four eggs of *Ardea purpurea*, the Purple Heron. As there were many nests of the White Herons with one egg only, I determined to leave them for some days. On our way back Marco knocked over, with a long shot, a fine Drake White-eyed Pochard (*Fuligula nyroca*).

While waiting for more eggs from this colony I

paid a flying visit to the locality of last year. Meeting the jovial 'capitan' of the little frontier village, he invited me to ride back with him. I did so, returning to Dulcigno the next day.

Unfortunately, there was so much water that we couldn't reach the reed-bed in which I found them nesting last year. I had three or four shots at Pelicans fishing on the river bar, but at very long range. I had to put up the 400-yard sight to reach them, and failed to secure one. We saw the first Golden Oriole on our way back, and some Pratincoles, of which we got one, shot by Nikola, who had walked over when he heard I was going there—I believe in order to see that I didn't get into any danger. He is now a *gens d'arme* employed by the Customs. I bought at this place some Turkish tobacco of the finest quality, at the rate of something under one shilling per pound.

On the 25th of April I paid a final visit to the Great White Herons, and took six more clutches of eggs; leaving many nests untouched which held only one or two eggs. I tried the automatic camera at these nests, and it had gone off when I returned, but I found no bird on the plate when developed. Probably the wind had moved the reeds to which the thread stretched across the nest had been attached. All automatic devices are necessarily very uncertain in their action, unfortunately. I should have liked



GREAT WHITE HERON (ARDEA ALBA)

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to wait at these nests for a photograph of the birds, as I did last year, but the water was excessively deep, and it was only with great difficulty that I could reach some of the nests at all. My man always looked very anxious when I left the boat and disappeared from his sight into the depths of the reed-bed, and very relieved when I turned up again all right.

For the sake of identification I shot, as I thought, a pair of birds, for one of them had such long plumes that I felt sure it was a male. On dissection, however, they both proved to be females.

Marco couldn't accompany me on this last day, for his old father had died on the previous day, after an illness of some weeks. I had seen him only four days before, when the poor old chap, then on his death-bed, crawled out of bed and tottered to his feet in order to examine my gun, and have the action explained to him. It was a striking example of the love of arms so universal in these countries, and a case of 'the ruling passion strong in death,' for within four days he was dead from exhaustion, having been unable to retain any food for some weeks.

I went to the funeral, and a most painful scene it was; for these people, so hardy and so accustomed to bloodshed, are as simple and as emotional as children. Marco, big as he was, fairly lifted up his

voice and *howled*—no other word expresses it—while the women gave way to paroxysms of sobs and weeping, and had to be almost carried from the grave-side.

I did not go into the church, being somewhat late, but sat outside with crowds of sympathizing neighbours; but I thought the elaborate musical service cruelly long, especially for such a people, compared with the merciful brevity and simplicity of our burial service.

A day or two later I bade farewell to all my friends in Montenegro, and embarked for Trieste amid a salvo of revolver-shots.

Trieste being only six hours from Venice, and having to stop on the way until I could procure some money from the bank at Budapest, on which I had a letter of credit, I ran across there to wait for the necessary funds to be remitted to me by post.

After a couple of days in this beautiful place, which I had never before seen, I proceeded to Budapest, *en route* for Roumania, for a second attempt to find a nesting colony of *Pelecanus onocrotalus* in the Delta of the Danube.

XIII

COLLECTING IN THE DOBRUDSCHA

I NOW return to the previous years' work. Arriving at Bucharest about the 20th of June, 1906, I found everybody in a state of excitement over the exhibition, which was on the point of opening. I had introductions to the British Embassy and to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, and other officials, to present before proceeding to the Dobrudscha ; but everybody was so occupied that I was obliged to remain, whether I liked it or not, in spite of the lateness of the season, until it was opened by the King and Queen of Roumania. Exhibitions do not appeal to me, but to pass the time, as I had nothing to do, I went to see what there was. This was mighty little. Whether it was better worth a visit later on I do not know, but when first opened there was absolutely nothing to see. The Austrian pavilion was the only exhibit ready ; the other buildings were, without exception, either empty or locked up and in a state of confusion.

Bucharest is a gay little town, and possesses the

finest cabs and the most imposing cabmen I have ever seen. The Roumanians like to compare their capital to Paris on a small scale, but I was very glad to get away as soon as I could, provided, by the kindness of the Minister of Fisheries, with a letter of introduction to the Administrator of Fisheries at Tulcea.

Leaving Bucharest by the night train I was at Galatz early the next morning in time to catch the steamer for the little town of Tulcea, which was reached soon after midday.

There are a good many tiresome formalities to be observed on entering Roumania, where bureaucracy and red-tapeism reign supreme. It is one of the few countries in Europe which insists on travellers being provided with passports, and these have to be viséed and stamped and inspected *ad nauseam*. Though I had shown my passport at the frontier, the same formality had to be again gone through at this little place before I could seek 'mine inn.' There are two little inns here which call themselves 'hotels,' but the accommodation is of a very humble character. Still, the bill is of a corresponding humility; and the traveller, if not too exacting, can make himself very comfortable as long as he has something to do to occupy his leisure.

To lose no time I called at once at the office of fisheries, but, as usual, was doomed to waste time

in spite of myself, for the administrator was away, and I had to wait for a day or two.

When at last he returned, and I explained my desire to find a nesting-place of *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, he was kind enough to propose that I should accompany one of his inspectors who was starting early the next morning on a tour of inspection to the stations in his district. By this means I should cover the whole, or nearly the whole, of the Delta district of the Danube, and he promised to give instructions to the inspector to make all necessary inquiries *en route* of the fishermen and the officials in charge of all the depôts.

This was too good a chance to lose, and I lost no time in getting ready for the expedition, which promised to be an interesting one.

Here, in Roumania, the fish, and all other natural products, as far as I could see, are presumed to be the property of the State. The fishermen are all licensed, and are obliged to bring their fish to the depôts, where they are packed in ice and sent to market and sold, the men getting a proportion of the sales. This system leads of course to a lot of friction, and to much grumbling on the part of the fishermen; but considering the nature of the district I do not see how they could improve upon it. If the men had to send their catch to market for themselves, or, through middle-

men, I fancy they would fare still worse than they do.

The whole of the Danube Delta is in the hands of the Administration, and it would have been impossible for me to have made this expedition without their sanction, for there are strict laws as to the protection of birds as well as to the catching of fish, and their officials everywhere have much power. But the fishing population are an unruly lot, and it is much easier to make laws in Bucharest than it is to enforce them in such a desolate region. There is much contraband fishing, in and out of season, and wholesale and systematic breaking of the bird protection orders is carried on everywhere.

The inspector's boat was a fine, large, open craft, fitted with two masts, each carrying a large sprit-sail, and with a crew of three men—Russians. She was a very fast sailer with a good wind, and was built on beautiful lines ; and I spent ten most interesting and sometimes exciting days on board of her. But the inspector, a Roumanian ex-sergeant of the army, was unable to speak any language but his own, though for the first two days I had the advantage of the company of the secretary of the Administration, M. Panaitescu, who spoke excellent French, as do all the educated classes in Roumania.

The beginning of our journey we made under tow,

taking advantage of the passing down the Sulina arm of a long string of iron corn-barges or lighters in charge of a tug. When we reached a fishery depôt we parted company, and here I had a meal with these men, tasting for the first time fish stew and soup. The Danube fish are excellent ; and, traveling with the secretary and inspector of fisheries, we had the pick of the fish in all the depôts we passed, as well as from the *lodkas* and nets of the fishermen. The Sterlet, resembling a small Sturgeon, is without bones except a grisly backbone, and is of excellent flavour, though to eat it in perfection it should, I think, be cold, as prepared in the Budapest restaurants. A Carp, cooked in the open by these Russian sailors in a big iron pot slung on an oar over a reed-fire, is food for a gourmand. The Danube Salmon (*Salmo hucho*) and Fresh-water Herrings are also splendid eating ; the latter especially are almost fatter and richer in flavour than the Salt-water Herring.

These three men were willing and obliging—at least two of them were, the other, a silent yellow man with a Tartar-like cast of face, spoke hardly a word, good or bad, to anybody. He must have come from some far-remote corner of the great Russian Empire, for neither of his compatriots could understand his speech. All that was known of him was that he had been one of the mutineers of the

Russian war-ship the *Potemkin*, in the Black Sea, 2,000 of whom had taken refuge in Roumania, and had settled down there.

At midday we left the Sulina arm and proceeded to the north, along what had formerly been the navigable channel before a short cut had been made across a big bend. Up this channel the men towed the boat against stream—our usual mode of procedure when our course was against the heavy Danube current, which runs with amazing force. You hear about the blue Danube, but never see it; the mud-charged waters of the great river are a dark brown in colour, and must carry into the Black Sea an astonishing amount of sediment held in suspension. The navigable arms forming the Delta—the Kilia, Sulina, and St. George's arms—are only kept to a navigable depth by numerous powerful dredges incessantly at work, clanking and groaning and snorting and puffing enough to frighten all the water-fowl for miles.

Towards evening we arrived at a small fishing-village, and put up at the superintendent's house, the men as usual sleeping in the boat. The mosquitoes in this place were as thick as bees when swarming. Around the houses the people were burning dry reeds to windward, the pungent smoke of which has some effect in lessening the plague, and my first business was to unpack and rig up



FISH DEPÔTS ON THE DANUBE

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my mosquito-net. This excited much admiration for the fineness of its texture, the fabric in universal use for the purpose being a thick, close sort of cheese-cloth, which must be very suffocating in the hot nights.

One of the fishermen here was engaged to take me in his *lodka* (boat) the next day to a Swan's nest which he knew of. The Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) is found here in a wild state, as well as the Wild Goose (*Anser cinereus*); but both nest early in the year, and by this time both species had hatched their young. In fact, at the house we were staying in they had a brood of young Wild Geese nearly full grown.

This fisherman was a big, bearded, rough-looking Russian, like nine-tenths of the fishermen in this district, and as I was to spend the whole day alone with him it was first necessary, before starting, to give him full instructions to last all day. Accordingly I explained to M. Panaitescu in French what I wanted to do and what he was to do; he then translated these instructions to one of our Russian boatmen into Roumanian, who again translated into Russian to the fisherman.

After these necessary preliminaries, off we started. For hours we progressed through narrow channels, at times crossing wide lakes covered with huge water-lilies and strange water-ferns without sighting

any human being. The only signs of life were the water birds and the mosquitoes. Every few yards a Purple or Grey Heron, so intent on fishing in some secluded corner as to allow the close approach of our boat, would start up and flap off in a hurried and ungainly fashion. On the matted water-lilies curious Night Herons stood, with the air of pensive melancholy characteristic to them, or Squacco Herons would hurry off at our approach to settle farther on and resume feeding.

The moment the sharp, upturned prow of our *lodka* pushed through the fringe of reeds which concealed some more open pool, squattering flocks of Coots and White-eyed Pochards (*Fuligula nyroca*) would hasten into the dense growth and be lost to sight.

Presently, at the far side of a large lake we were crossing, we saw a pair of Swans, and my guide cautiously entered the reeds and made signs that we were approaching the nest. The last hundred yards we progressed with the utmost slowness and caution, pulling ourselves forward with our hands; but the nest when we reached it was empty, and had not been occupied for at least twenty-four hours; so that my hopes of an automatic photograph of old or young, by leaving the electric camera, were doomed to disappointment.

For some time we hunted about for another nest,

but only succeeded in finding one that was submerged under more than a foot of water by a recent flood. The labour now expended in forcing the *lodka* through the dense reeds which towered over our heads was excessive ; sometimes all our efforts could not move the boat an inch. The heat was terrific ; and shut in as we were by gigantic reeds there seemed to be no air to breathe. We were enveloped by dense clouds of hungry mosquitoes and poisonous flies nearly as big as wasps, which fetched blood at every bite, so that even the bare, horny feet of the fisherman were streaked with blood.

Other insects, too, of a more interesting nature were there in great numbers. I had been asked to keep an eye open for specimens of the larva or pupa of the moth *Lælia cœnosa*, which at one time was to be found in our own Eastern counties, but which is now extinct. Curiously enough, I had seen one larva in Montenegro, but not knowing that it was of any interest had not troubled about it. While struggling in this desolate place I suddenly saw a similar larva on a reed-leaf we had passed. Making signs to the Russian to go back a little it was soon found, and proved to be identical, and I then examined the reeds with more care as we progressed. No more larvæ could be seen, but very many elongated whitish cocoons were discovered on the stems of the reeds. I had no evidence that these pupa cocoons

were related in any way to the larvæ, but had strong suspicions that they might be, and soon collected a goodly number, only to find that the majority were empty, the moths having emerged. That led me to connect the cocoons with the numbers of small whitish moths which were fluttering about the reeds and settling on our clothes and about the boat. Here was a scarce and valuable insect literally to be seen in thousands, and I had nothing in which to take the specimens or to keep them undamaged until my return, not having provided myself with an entomological collecting apparatus.

After emerging with the greatest difficulty from this place we found a big colony of Common Terns (*Sterna fluviatilis*) and the graceful Little Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra*) nesting on the floating masses of roots of the water-lily in very deep water. These roots, matted together into lumps of varying sizes, formed floating islands on which the birds had laid their eggs. Here, too, were many nests of the Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*).

The scene everywhere was of great interest, and of remarkable beauty. The many floating islands of gigantic reeds, with their undergrowth of ferns of a vivid green, reflected in the deep water; the water-lilies, and other water-plants strange to me, made up a strange but enchanting picture. But I could not help wondering what chance I should



WHITE STORKS (*CICONIA ALBA*)

have of ever escaping from this watery labyrinth if anything were to happen to my boatman. Our boat, which was nothing but a canoe sharp at both ends, had turned and twisted in a dozen different directions, through channels each one of which exactly resembled the other, and through reeds which closed up and had completely hidden any trace of a passage. There was no dry land, nothing but water of varying depths, reeds, water-plants, and floating islands which tip up when you put a foot on one, or sink bodily under your weight. At rare intervals, groups of willow-trees stand up out of the sea of reeds. In one of these we found the beautiful swinging nest of a Penduline Tit, but it was not quite finished, the spout being still wanting.

We spent a couple of days in this neighbourhood, and I photographed a family of White Storks on a hay-stack close to our lodgings. The orchards in the village were much infested with the huge larvæ of *Saturnia major*. Very curious and beautiful objects they were. One man gave me a hatful of them, and I found some myself on the apricot-trees. They were full-grown, so that I put them into some small cardboard cartridge-boxes, feeling sure that they would spin up inside, which they did. It would have been impossible for me to have looked after them and fed them while on this boat expedition, always on the move.

From here we went back to Sulina, where I slept one night in the hotel. It is a miserable place, infested with hordes of bloodthirsty mosquitoes, which must render miserable the lives of those unfortunates doomed to live there. During these hot summer evenings everybody sits outside the cafés and restaurants, listening to the tinkling strains of the zithers and guitars of Jewish and Greek girls, who sing Roumanian melodies, not forgetting to come round with the hat, or with a big shell, at frequent intervals. But I have seen the singers fairly stopped sometimes by mosquitoes, and handkerchiefs and fans are in constant motion in the attempt to keep moving the poisonous throng of winged tormentors. Fans are in regular use by men as well as women here. The feeble light of the oil-lamps in the streets is almost obscured by the countless numbers of insects, in spite of the stifling fumes of the bonfires of reeds kept burning in the streets during these evening hours. Grumblers who complain of the vicissitudes of the English climate ought to be condemned to pass a summer in Sulina, just to see how they like it.

Early in the morning we re-embarked in our *lodka*, after laying in a stock of bread, chickens, and other provisions; and, passing out of the entrance of the Danube mouth, set our sails, and steered out into the Black Sea. There was a fresh breeze, and

we bowled along at a good speed to the southwards, making for the southernmost arm of the Danube Delta—the St. George's Arm.

M. Panaitescu had left us before reaching Sulina, and had returned to Tulcea. As without him it was impossible to communicate with any of my companions, I picked up in the streets of Sulina, and engaged, a Greek, who could speak fair English, well enough at any rate to act as interpreter. I took him entirely on trust, knowing nothing about him; but he served me very well. I paid him, I think, four shillings a day; he ate and slept with the men, and I paid his passage back to Sulina on our return to Tulcea.

On reaching the St. George's Arm about midday, we landed and cooked one of the chickens we had brought with us. These men were wonderfully good cooks. The chickens, roasted over a fire of reeds on a sharpened stick, one end of which was stuck in the ground, were delicious. Of course, living in this open-air life our appetites were good, and I for one was always ready for our midday halt.

From this point we struck off to the southwards, leaving the St. George's Arm near its mouth, making our way through narrow circuitous channels through the Lake of Dranov, towards the large Lake Razelm.

Looking at the map, the spaces between the arms

of the Delta might be thought to be dry land. The fact is, there is hardly an inch of dry land; all is water, vast reed-beds, floating islands, and desolation, inhabited by water-fowl, fish, otters, frogs, and mosquitoes. All night the deafening croak of millions and millions of frogs is unceasing. When once the navigable channels are left one hardly meets a human being. At long intervals, perhaps, a solitary fisherman paddling his *lodka* may be seen going the round of his nets. Drum-nets are largely used, of great length, and whenever a long row of sticks was sighted above the water, the contents of the net would be investigated, and if there was anything special, like a fine fat Carp, or a Sterlet, it was abstracted for our pot. If by any chance the commissariat was empty, any passing fishing-canoe was overhauled and the best fish taken for our use. Payment was never made, and the men seemed to take it as a matter of course, so I presumed that it was all fair and square.

That certainly could not be said for all the doings of our crew, who on occasions looted right and left, snapping up any unconsidered trifles that were eatable. One evening we were passing a marsh not far from a collection of huts, when they sighted a flock of geese unattended. It was pouring with rain at the time, and we had had a long and wet day's journey; but in an instant two of the men fairly

flung themselves overboard, into waist-deep water, chased the geese, like two great boys having a lark, and caught three of them. The inspector made them let one go, but the other two had their heads cut off, and were plucked and in the pot in a very few minutes. There was a trail of goose feathers behind the boat for a mile at least.

Another time the men had been towing against a strong current, and I was having a nap on one side, while the inspector followed suit on the other, where we had made ourselves a comfortable lounge with rugs and coats. Suddenly I missed the ripple of the water against the bows, and there was a sudden mysterious silence. I opened one eye lazily and saw that the boat had stopped and one of the men was in the act of cutting the throat of a sucking-pig *under water*, so that it shouldn't squeal, while another, that had been already killed in like manner, lay beside him. They had come on a family of piglings with the old sow. These two also went into their omnivorous pot, and I don't think the inspector ever knew anything about it.

I told them I should expect an invitation to dinner for holding my tongue, and suggested that they might capture a cow, for the sake of fresh milk on board. How quickly one becomes demoralized in bad company!

Once or twice our progress in the narrower

channels was stopped by a fish-trap barring the whole width of the stream, necessitating a 'portage' round the obstruction. This was an arduous undertaking, requiring all hands, as the boat was a large one. These fish-traps are ingenious arrangements made of reed-stems in intricate designs, so that the fish can enter, but are unable to escape again. Generally a man or two would be living there in a conical hut of reeds—a most forlorn, miserable existence, devoured by mosquitoes and leeches. One poor old fellow, over seventy years old in appearance, we found alone in a most pestiferous spot, many miles from anywhere. He was too feeble even to pretend to assist us, and too apathetic to do more than look up at us as we passed his lonely abode. The air was perfectly thick with mosquitoes, which fell to with greedy haste at the sight of fresh blood, and while we were busy with the boat they punished us most severely. They must have exhausted the veins of the old fisherman long ago. I wouldn't have spent the night there without a mosquito-net for ten pounds. For some reason the sight of the place, and the old man laboriously catching fish, gave me the horrors, such an impression it made on my mind of unutterable loneliness and desolation.

As soon as we reached open water all sail was set, and we simply tore through the water before the strong wind. Razelm is perhaps ten miles



FISH-TRAP ON THE DANUBE—OUR BOATMAN TRYING TO GET A FISH
FOR DINNER



FISH-BOATS OFF THE QUAY, BUDAPEST

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across and thirty or more long, so that we had plenty of room. About half-way over, a small boat was seen under sail on the farther side, and as for some reason the inspector fancied she was carrying a cargo of contraband fish, we altered our course to cut it off. Observing this she also altered her course somewhat, and made for the shore. After an exciting chase of seven or eight miles, during which we gained on her fast, we watched her closely through my glass to see if they were throwing any cargo overboard, and on nearing her fired repeatedly over her with revolvers until they took in the sail, and lay to right in our track. Instead of shortening sail or bearing away a trifle our steersman kept our boat straight for her, crashing into her amidships with terrific force, until her timbers cracked, and she heeled over so much that I thought she was sinking. There were no fish visible, only two Bulgars, looking rather aggrieved, as well they might.

With no word of explanation, as soon as we could get our boat free and under weigh again, we sheered off and left them to make their way as best they could, while we continued our voyage towards a distant village. This we did not reach until long after dark, and by the time we had landed and entered a restaurant for some supper, I was quite ready for bed. By a restaurant I do not mean the comfortable room with marble-topped tables and

velvet lounges we are used to at home. A restaurant in these regions is a rough wine-shop used by fishermen. The tables and wooden stools are of the plainest and roughest description, and the whole place has a dirty and unkempt appearance. Inside there are perhaps a dozen Russian fishermen drinking vodka, or tea, singing and shouting and making an inconceivable din. The wooden stools are sometimes used as missiles and weapons when the vodka has been indulged in too freely.

As a rule I must say I found the Russian a peaceable individual, except when exhilarated with vodka; but I saw one who had been drinking all day seize a Tartar by the throat and fling him on to the floor merely for presuming to sit at the same table. The waiter, quite a boy, came up as they were struggling and felt the Tartar to make sure he carried no knife, as if he was used to such incidents.

But on another occasion, while I was engaged in blowing eggs under a tree, a drunken Russian who approached, as he said, to talk English to the Englishman, was seized and thrown into the Danube by the inspector, who always seemed to consider himself responsible for my safety. There he stood, complaining in a whimpering tone like a whipped baby. There would have been bloodshed in less than no time if such a thing had happened in Albania or Montenegro. Here, however, it is not

customary to carry arms. The inspector, it is true, carried a revolver, but he had to enforce orders on an unruly body of men. On my next visit to these parts I was told he had been savagely attacked by a man, whose licence he had demanded for carrying a gun, on one of the remote islets in the Balta, and so beaten over the head with a gun-barrel that he had been left for dead.

At one thing I was agreeably surprised. On halting for the night we always managed to engage a bed at the house of some fisherman. And I must say that the sight of these rough, unkempt, bearded fishermen drinking vodka in their grog-shops was not calculated to lead to great expectation for much comfort in their homes. But I always found a very clean, comfortable bed, a clean room tastefully decorated with home-made embroideries, and as a rule no mosquitoes and no fleas—a dwelling-place immensely superior to a Spanish *choza* or an Albanian hut, both in comfort and cleanliness. In one corner there was invariably a sacred picture in a little niche, with a small oil-lamp perpetually burning before it.

But these rooms were only engaged for the night, our custom being to be away soon after daybreak; and when, as was the case here, we were delayed by the weather, heavy rain and contrary wind, we had no resting-place for the sole of our foot, except

to wander from one restaurant to another through the long and weary day. How sick I used to get of them!

Immense numbers of sturgeon are caught here. There was one huge building nearly full of them packed in frozen snow. They were being dispatched to Tulcea in wagons. They are caught by buoying large hooks on a chain, against which the great fish come and scratch their backs and rub themselves, with disastrous results. It seems a curious method, but there is no doubt about its success.

I used sometimes to wish I had brought a fishing-rod and strong tackle. I believe that in this lower Danube fine sport could be had. Some of the fish run to immense size, five and six feet long. Along the banks one constantly passes willow-branches firmly stuck into the bank, generally at an eddy at a jutting corner. From the end of this rod dangles a hook, like a meat-hook in a butcher's shop, at the end of a stout cord like a clothes-line. The bait, I believe, is a small fish. Sometimes from the Danube steamers I have seen these set rods buckling and bending with the struggles of some unseen monster in the depths below; but though we passed hundreds on this boat expedition I never saw anything caught. In fact, the hook was always unbaited whenever I was able to stop

and haul up the line. I believe they take in this way a huge big-headed fish like a Cat-fish, which I have seen in the well-boats which bring live fish up to Budapest.

This river, too, produces the biggest, fattest, and juiciest-looking Mayflies I have ever seen. I wish I could have brought some back to introduce into our Trout streams. In spite of all our inquiries at each stopping-place we never got any reliable information about the Pelicans. The fishermen we questioned either professed ignorance or else contradicted themselves and one another so hopelessly that their evidence was never worth acting upon. And though I was constantly on the look-out for Pelicans, I never saw more than one passing glimpse of some flying at a great distance off, so far away in fact that even with a powerful glass I was unable to say for certain that they were Pelicans. The size of our boat made it necessary to keep to the deeper channels, and we were obliged to leave all the maze of reed-beds and shallow water which lay between untouched. It was quite possible to have passed a dozen colonies of Pelicans unseen and unnoticed; and I feel certain that the fishermen were reluctant to give information to one in the official position of an Inspector of Fisheries. The probability is that they didn't want him to be making any stay in their neighbourhood, there being a natural

antagonism between them, and the sooner he took his departure the better they would like it.

But if the search for Pelicans was a failure, we saw great numbers of other birds. Sea Eagles were constantly to be seen on the trees and stumps overhanging the water, while Marsh Harriers and Pallid Harriers quartered marsh and reed-bed. In the shallows fed multitudes of Night Herons (*Nycticorax griseus*), Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), Purple Herons (*Ardea purpurea*), Grey Herons (*A. cinerea*), and Squacco Herons (*A. ralloides*). Bitterns boomed in the impenetrable morasses, and Crested Grebes (*Podiceps cristatus*), Red-necked Grebes (*P. rubricollis*), and Black-necked Grebes (*P. nigricollis*) dived among the water-lilies as their solitudes were disturbed by the passage of our boat.

In the cliffs of earth which we sometimes passed were great assemblages of Bee-eaters and Rollers, their brilliant plumage shining in the sun as they hovered in front of their nesting-holes, while Rollers and Hoopoes flitted about through the willow-trees which are such a characteristic feature of the banks of the Danube. Amid the impenetrable and tangled recesses of the reeds and sedges Savi's Warblers reeled their curious and monotonous song, invisible save to the closest search; and the harsh and grating song of countless numbers of Great Reed Warblers resounded on every side. White Storks were



SEA EAGLE (*HALIAETUS ALBICILLA*)

nesting in most of the villages, as on the roofs of the solitary fishing-huts in the most remote localities.

Huge dragon-flies of gorgeous colours darted hither and thither through the dense clouds of mosquitoes, doing their best to keep down the numbers of these tormentors. On wellnigh every reed-stem the empty pupa-skins of dragon-flies clung like pale ghosts, most weird-looking and curious to behold.

When at last we returned to Tulcea, after ten days' sojourn in the wilderness, it had to be acknowledged that the search for *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, for this season at least, must be accounted a failure. And it was too late in the year, July, to expect to do any good with the other species nesting in the Dobrudscha. We had seen young Swans and Wild Geese, and Herons. Young Night Herons in the brown spotted plumage were flying about with their parents, and it was obviously useless to remain any longer.

XIV

COLLECTING IN THE DOBRUDSCHA—*continued*

WHEN I next visited the Dobrudscha in the middle of May 1907, matters were not looking very promising. A serious uprising of the peasants had just been suppressed by troops and artillery. Many villages had been entirely destroyed, and the unfortunate peasants had been shot down, *comme les mouches*, as a lady described it to me in the train on my way to Bucharest. To add to the distress, the low-lying country all around the Danube mouth was inundated from the melting snows, while at the same time the fertile country too high to feel the effect of floods was suffering from drought. A somewhat unusual combination to have, too much and too little water at the same time, but so it was. No rain had fallen for some months, and it was feared that the entire corn crop would be a failure unless rain fell within a few days.

The fishermen also had risen in revolt, and the administrator, for whose protection and assistance

I hoped, had been obliged to have a battalion of soldiers to protect himself; but by this time this difficulty also had been settled, and I was told that everything was then quiet. I could see for myself from the steamer the extent of the inundations between Galatz and Tulcea, and could not help having misgivings about the effect this would be likely to have on the nesting of the birds. These misgivings were justified. Herr Rettig of Malcoci, whom I called on as soon as I arrived at Tulcea, told me that the nesting-places of many of the birds in the Balta were under water, and that they were also disturbed by the fact that the extra water had enabled the fishermen to penetrate in their *lodkas* into parts where, as a rule, they were unable to go. It seems that the wild animals had also suffered, hundreds of Wild Cats being drowned, also many Wild Boars; while others had been driven by the water to small islets, and were so reduced by starvation that the fishermen knocked them on the head with oars for the sake of their skins. Numbers of Wolves also had been driven from their usual retreats into the forests, where they were doing much damage, devouring cattle and horses daily.

As Herr Rettig invited me to come and take up my quarters in his house, I did so very gladly, for he knows all the country and speaks the language;

and it was much more comfortable than putting up at the miserable little hotel in Tulcea.

It was decided to make an expedition together to the forest of Babadagh, distant some fifty kilometres ; but as a first step permission had to be obtained from the prefect before I could travel along the high road.

This permission took us two days and two journeys into Tulcea to obtain, for my passport, which had been properly viséed in London, had not been viséed by the British Consul in Galatz. I had never heard of such a requirement before in any other country. The prefect was away, and without this tiresome formality no one in his absence had power to do anything. However, on his arrival he kindly gave me a temporary pass, while my passport was posted to Galatz. This favour was probably owing to Rettig's representations ; for though he spoke in Roumanian, I could follow it enough to understand that he was drawing on his imagination, and endowing me with an important official position in London at the British Museum ! When taxed with it afterwards he said it was quite right, that in Roumania an official position is worshipped, while without it one is nobody and can do nothing.

We were then free to start, and did so the next morning early in a country wagon with two horses. But at every village on the road where we halted

for refreshments, and to give the horses a rest, we were interviewed by a prefect or a sub-prefect, and had to show our passports, and answer innumerable questions as to our business. Rettig was a very useful companion in many ways, and he understood these people thoroughly, being really very clever in getting his own way with them.

One of these sub-prefects I shall never forget. He was drinking with a priest, a pope of the Greek Church, at a wine shop we had stopped at for some food. Seeing that we were strangers, he came up and introduced himself and demanded our passports and business. After that he became friendly, and though he was then half-drunk we had to call for a fresh bottle of wine, and after that another, and yet another, while he talked of his adventures in foreign lands. He had been everywhere, all over Europe, and spoke French, Italian, and Spanish fluently, but was especially proud of his English. For my benefit he poured out a torrent of the foulest and filthiest talk I have ever heard anywhere, in such extraordinary English that I could not help laughing, but I told him he had evidently learnt in a very bad school. This he took for a compliment. Then he bragged of his skill as a sportsman, and told us of the enormous Bears and Wild Boars he had shot in places where to Rettig's certain knowledge they did not exist. Hearing I had a

rifle with me, he begged to see it, and it was difficult to keep from laughing to see him handle and point it. He had evidently never handled one before. He wanted to shoot at a swallow sitting on a telegraph wire, in the middle of the village, and I have no doubt that if I had provided him with a cartridge he would have blazed away, and probably there would have been a case of manslaughter. I thought we were doomed to hear him 'gas' all night, but at last we managed to escape. That sub-prefect was a standing joke with us for the remainder of my stay, and provided us with much amusement, though at the time the man was an unmitigated nuisance.

The roads we found fairly good, but terribly uneven, and, the wagon being without springs, the jolting was terrific. My teeth were nearly driven through the top of my head sometimes, and I had to hold my stomach together with one hand while I clutched the side of the wagon with the other.

The dust was awful, quite four inches thick, and it flew about in dense clouds.

After ten hours of this torture under a broiling sun at last we arrived at our destination, the last eight or nine miles being through the outskirts of the forest, which gave us a relief from the dust and the heat, though we could only progress sometimes at a walk. An acquaintance of Rettig's, with whom



WHITE STORK (CICONIA ALBA)

we expected to put up, was away at his farm, and as he had married a wife who knew us not we could only leave our things until he returned, and we had to wander about from one restaurant to another until a very late hour. When at last he did return we were given a good room with a cushioned divan all round on which we slept comfortably, as I had brought my rugs and sleeping-bag.

All this Dobrudscha was Turkish before the Treaty of Berlin, and many Turkish customs and Turkish names still survive. These people had their meals squatting on the floor round a low table three or four inches high, just as in Albania. The names of nearly all the villages are Turkish. Babadagh, the name of the forest we had come to work, is distinctly Turkish. The population is exceedingly mixed. Some villages are entirely inhabited by Bulgars, others are nearly all Italian or German. The fishermen are generally all Russians. In one village I found many Tartars from the Crimea; and in the towns are Jews and Greeks in great numbers, so that in a few generations there will be a fine blend here.

Though we slept here four nights, all our meals—except when we were in the forest, which was all day—had to be taken in restaurants; and a most uncomfortable way of living it is. This was a big

village and there was plenty of choice ; but they are all equally bare, rough, and comfortless. It was extraordinary to see prefects and officials, officers, priests, potmen, waiters, and barkeepers all hobnobbing together on equal terms in these pot-house places full of half-drunken fishermen all singing and shouting at the top of their voices.

This forest is really a wooded range of rocky hills, about 1,000 feet in height at one end ; and as there are one or two precipitous crags there are a good many Griffon Vultures and Egyptian Vultures nesting there, and Eagles of various sorts are common. The Black Vultures also are fairly numerous, but they nest in the large trees growing on the higher parts.

Our first visit was to a colony of Griffons which were nesting in a semi-circular wall of rock not far from the village. But before we could reach the top of this rock-face—for from below it was inaccessible—there was a long tramp and a wind- and muscle-testing climb up a steep, rock-strewn slope. On the way we had seen a Black Kite (*Milvus ater*) and two or three Eagles ; and as we neared the colony many Griffons and a Black Vulture passed overhead, and an Eagle Owl was seen on the other side of a rocky valley. Two Egyptian Vultures also flew along the face of a precipitous rock, some ledges of which were liberally whitewashed as if

they might be nesting there, but it was too overhung to tackle. Besides, I felt very unsafe on these rocks; I was wearing rawhide Montenegrin *opankis*, and after one or two bad slips I funk'd any place that was at all dangerous. In Spanish *alparagatas* I think I could have reached some of the ledges; but in these things I felt so insecure that I would run no risks. From Rettig's description I had expected to find it easy to photograph the Vultures on their nests, but it was not possible to get near enough, and the birds were very shy—I believe they are often shot at here—and a very long wait would have been necessary with but poor hope of success. It was of course too late to think about eggs of such early breeders, so we left them in peace, and proceeded first of all in search of water, of which we were much in need, for the heat was great. (While we were reconnoitring the position of the griffonry I had laid my rifle down in the sun on a rock, and on picking it up half an hour afterwards it was so hot I could hardly bear to touch it.)

There were some delightful little streams running through the valleys, and at one of these we rested and ate our lunch lying on the soft turf, listening to the babble of the water and watching the sun flickering through the leaves of the beech-tree overhead—*recubans sub tegmine fagi*—until we all went fast asleep.

Then we had a hunt for a certain tree whereon the Black Vulture had nested in former years ; but after toiling up several hillsides, and forcing our way through the undergrowth until we were tired out, we found at last that the tree had fallen. We were rather late for finding nests in this forest, for the leaves were so thick and the trees so large that it was very difficult to see even such a huge nest as a Vulture's. We ought to have been here at least a month earlier, in April. It was now the 24th of May.

Some passing woodcutters on being questioned told us of another nest at some distance, but again we had great difficulty in finding it. At last after a long search we saw an enormous nest on the summit of a huge silver poplar, but so shut in with trees as to be almost hidden.

While I was cutting down two small intervening trees which grew higher up the hillside, so that I could get a clear photograph, I saw the bird's head move in the nest, and, thinking there was a young bird, called out to Rettig, who was lower down the slope.

To my surprise a huge Vulture then flew off, showing a tremendous expanse of wings, and though our fool of a driver had fired at it as she had left the nest, she returned again in a few minutes while I was struggling to get the camera to bear on the nest. Rettig, who had rushed up, was very excited,



CARRYING BACK THE BLACK VULTURE (VULTUR MONACHUS)

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and fairly pushed the rifle into my hands, saying, 'Tirez—tirez.' I tried to explain that it would be very easy to photograph it first and to shoot it afterwards; but my French did not come very fluently, and I was afraid that if I didn't shoot he would, so very reluctantly I took aim and pulled the trigger. A tremendous crash followed as the great bird collapsed and fell from the summit of the tree through the branches to the ground. They all patted me on the back and congratulated me on the shot; but I felt very savage at not having been able to get the photograph. For I remembered Prince Rudolf's account of how the Black Vultures he had met with had come back to the nest after having been repeatedly fired at, and I felt that a great mistake had been made, and that in all probability I should never have such another chance again.¹

To save carrying such a weight all the way back we skinned her on the spot, for it proved to be a female. (The length from beak to tail was forty-two inches; iris hazel, cere blue, beak dark-brown, feet bluish-white, claws black.) We found that it had been shot before, for there were eight large pellets of lead under the skin.

There was one egg, very handsomely freckled all over with reddish-brown spots, which proved to

¹ This foreboding proved to be too true.

be addled. I have noticed before how frequently one finds addled eggs of the larger raptorial birds, and also how much the silver poplar is favoured by them for nesting purposes.

This nest was of immense size, and had a whitish look about it, also as described by Prince Rudolf; but he must have drawn on his imagination in his account of the terrible stench exhaled by the bird he shot in Slavonia. There was no very offensive smell either when we skinned this bird or afterwards—for I slept several nights with the fresh skin lying not far from my bed. Nor was skinning the Griffon which I shot in Albania such a very objectionable undertaking. In fact, neither of these two Vultures smelt so much as a Pelican, and not nearly so much as a Pygmy Cormorant. This last, I believe, is called in Germany the *Schtinker*. At any rate Rettig always called it that, and it certainly justifies the name, for it is the foulest bird I ever skinned.

I have often wondered how it is that such huge birds as Griffon Vultures, which always live together in great numbers in places where they are found at all, can find enough carrion lying about to support themselves. Here it was a common sight every day to see the Griffons sailing along in great numbers searching for dead bodies, and as two or three Griffons can put away a dead sheep in a short time,

the amount of meat necessary to keep alive such hordes of flesh-eating birds must be very considerable. But here the supply of dead animals was more than sufficient to keep them; in one day we passed five dead horses, sheep, and cows, and another living skeleton in the shape of a horse feebly tottered about hardly able to stand upright.

Many of these no doubt had perished on account of the drought. There was hardly any grass, and the country was overstocked with cattle from the lower parts, all seeking food where there was not sufficient for the ordinary numbers. Again, during wet weather hundreds of cattle get bogged and perish miserably, and in the cold weather they die of exposure and starvation, so that all the year round the Vultures are provided for. If there is a little temporary scarcity in the supply they can go without much inconvenience many days without eating at all, and their power of flight enables them to travel hundreds of miles, if need be, into another country in their daily search for food.

The following day we went to a distant part of the forest after a nest of Imperial Eagle, or what had been occupied by a pair of Imperial Eagles last year. Now we found it had been taken possession of by a pair of Saker Falcons (*Falco sacer*), which had four young in down.

It was one of the finest things I have seen in the

bird world to watch the old bird—the female—dashing round the tree as our man was climbing to the nest, and making frantic stoops at his head, uttering all the time fierce cries of rage. He told us that she never actually touched him, but it certainly appeared as if she was doing so from where we stood. Rettig and our driver, Andreas, shot at her several times, but luckily without effect, as she flew at such lightning speed that it was very difficult to see more than a momentary glimpse as she passed the surrounding tree-tops. I should have been very sorry if this brave bird had been killed.

Returning this day in single file along a stony path, three of us walked over a Viper coiled up behind a stone. As Rettig passed just behind me, the last man saw it strike at his foot, and called us back. If he had been a bare-footed native he would have been in all probability bitten. He told me that he had known several fatal cases of bites from this small Viper, which has two small curved horns in its nose. I picked it up alive by the tail, too quickly for it to strike, and held it up to show them how it was powerless to turn round to bite in that position ; but they were much alarmed, and very unwilling for me to approach it until I assured them that I could do it all right. It had been coiled up behind a flat stone in the middle of the path, where it was almost invisible.



IMPERIAL EAGLE RETURNING TO NEST

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Our third and last day we spent in the endeavour to reach a distant nesting-place of the great Eagle Owl (*Bubo maximus*). However, we never got there, for after we had gone quite fifteen kilometres I was told that it was still twenty more, and as it was then 3 p.m. we decided to give up the quest.

We had delayed too long at a nest of Imperial Eagle (*Aquila imperialis*), which we had found on the way. It being in a favourable position, an attempt was made to photograph the bird, which had left the nest as we approached. Hiding up among some bushes on the hillside almost level with the nest, which was in a silver poplar in a valley, we waited some time in vain. Then I sent away two of the men, Andreas and Dimitru, as there were five of us, too many by far. Still another wait, and no sign of the Eagle. I was just saying to Rettig, '*Elle ne vient pas,*' and was preparing to get up, when a low hiss from him made me look up, and I saw that she had alighted on the nest, unfortunately behind a branch which hid nearly all her body. She gave me a better chance a few moments later, after which she left. But she soon returned. Neither time was she in a good position, but I had to take it or nothing.

Then Rettig handed me the rifle, and I fired after taking a steady aim. She seemed to fall, but recovered and went off apparently all right, and

though I thought she had fallen round the corner of the hill, both of my companions declared she had flown right away. I couldn't make it out, for I knew the aim had been right, and that I had been perfectly steady; and I felt that it was impossible I had missed her. There was a chance that the bullet had struck the branch which stuck up in front of her, but I could see no mark on examining it with my glass. There were two much-incubated eggs in this nest.

Late that night we heard that a boy had found this Eagle still alive, and had killed her with a stick and left her. I was very disgusted, and would far sooner have missed her altogether than have killed her for nothing like this, for we were leaving early the next morning, and the distance was too far to send and fetch her in.

All this high ground was full of people with their flocks and herds, who had been flooded out of the Balta, the low, swampy country surrounding and between the various arms and channels of the Balta, by the inundations. The valley in which we had found the Imperial Eagle was traversed in every direction by herdsmen. Flocks of sheep were grazing on the bare hillsides, where hardly a blade of grass was visible; and their owners were camping out in rude conical shelters of reeds until the fall of the water should allow them to return from whence



ROUMANIAN SHEPHERDS' HUT



A MEAL OF POLENTA

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they came. At one of these shepherds' huts we were compelled to go begging for a meal, for when I had sent Andreas away he had thoughtfully taken all the 'grub' with him, and now couldn't be found. We found them milking their flock, and had to wait until they had finished.

I had never before known the use of a sheep's tail, now I realized that if useless to the animal it forms a very useful handle for the shepherd. Two men sat at the entrance of a fold enclosing some fifty sheep, and as each animal came forward it was seized by the tail, pulled backwards over the pail and milked dry in less than half a minute, and then pushed forward to make room for another. As soon as they had finished they conducted us into the hut while they set about making some *polenta* over a fire made in a hole in the ground. Maize meal was cooked like porridge, mixed with water and a pinch of salt, in a round iron pot. This rises like bread and is turned out solid, and cut into slices with a fine string. You can't cut it with a knife. It looks like sponge-cake, and eaten with fresh sheeps' milk isn't half bad; but I shouldn't like to live entirely on it all the year round as these shepherds do. It is very satisfying, and we went on the strength of it until the evening. In fact, Rettig couldn't eat any supper that night, so it lasted him till next day.

By this time we had decided to give up the nesting-place of *Bubo maximus*, as the distance was too great, and turned off to search a neighbouring hill, an outlying spur of the forest. Here we found a nest in a small oak, from which flew a Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*). I waited some time for a photograph, hoping it would return ; but as we had been obliged to cut part of a branch away which obstructed the view of the nest, she took alarm and refused to go back to it, though she sat on the tree-top for some time, but in a position impossible to get at with the camera. There was one large white egg in the nest.

The situation was a charming one. Immediately below the nest a small stream fell from one mossy boulder to another on its course down the valley, and its murmur mingled with the rustling of the leaves and the songs of many birds ; while from the valley immediately below rose the cries of the herdsmen and the clanging of the cattle-bells as they wandered hither and thither feeding among the bushes.

The next day we returned to Malcoci, and were not sorry to take it easy for a day or two after our exertions, visiting some of the colonies of Bee-eaters not very far from the village, for eggs and photographs.

There are many clefts or cracks in the soft, loamy

soil, sometimes several yards in length and ten or twelve feet deep. In the sides of these nest numbers of Bee-eaters (*Merops apiaster*), Rollers (*Coracias garrula*), Hoopoes (*Upupa epops*), and Tree Sparrows (*Passer montanus*), and an occasional Kestrel, or Little Owl; while if water is near, as is often the case, then Kingfishers also may be found using the burrows.

Just now there are numbers of Rose-coloured Pastors passing through this district, and I was able to obtain several with a walking-stick gun—some of the cocks in extremely fine plumage, with long, glossy crests, and bodies of a brilliant pink. When, as sometimes happens, thirty or forty of these beautiful birds settle in a small tree they look exactly like brilliant pink blossoms at a little distance. On my return journey through Budapest I heard that these birds were nesting in Hungary. They have the curious custom of not nesting regularly in any particular country, but sometimes in one district, where for years they are never seen, and sometimes elsewhere. They follow the locusts, on which they largely feed, and their movements depend upon the wandering flocks of those insects.

The Lesser Grey Shrike (*Lanius minor*) is exceedingly abundant in this upper steppe-like country; in the lower parts you never see it. In the front of Rettig's house were three acacia-trees; in two of

these were nests of this Shrike, and there was another one at the back. The birds may be seen in every direction, sitting on the telegraph wires, as do the Bee-eaters and Rollers, and on the small oak-trees and acacias. We found numbers of their nests; they are generally at a height of at least fifteen or twenty feet. The outside of these nests is made of twigs of a whitish colour, exactly like the nests of the Woodchat Shrike in Spain, and there is almost always some of the strongly-smelling aromatic vermouth worked into the nest. This plant grows abundantly, and covers the ground like a weed wherever it is left uncultivated. Five clutches were common, and we found several of six and seven.

On the ground among the vermouth we found several nests of *Emberiza hortulana*, the Ortolan Bunting, and no doubt the Calandra Lark also nested there. We saw many of these large larks, but did not happen to find a nest.

On the 21st of May we took two eggs of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*); and on the same day a young Golden Oriole in greenish-yellow plumage was shot. I took it for a female, but on dissection it proved to be a male; it must therefore have been a bird of the previous year. I should have expected this bird to have acquired its full adult plumage sooner.



NEST OF ORTOLAN BUNTING (EMBERIZA HORTULANA)

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On the 22nd of May a male Barred Warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*) was brought in by a boy. It was barred like a little Sparrow-hawk. A few days later, I see, on reference to my note-book, that we took a clutch of seven Bee-eaters' eggs, and also seven Hoopoes. Of Rollers the largest clutch was four.

On the 30th of May Rettig shot a Pygmy Cormorant, alias *Schtinker*. At the report a Purple Heron and a Marsh Harrier both got up. From the Harrier's manner of rising I suspected a nest, and on going to the spot found one containing four nearly fresh eggs. On the same day I shot a Savi's Warbler (*Locustella luscinioides*) with the walking-stick at very close quarters. Three of us—Rettig, a fisherman, and myself—were peering into the recesses of a floating reed-island while the bird was reeling away within two yards of our noses, and we couldn't see it. At last I caught a glimpse and fired; but though we all saw it fall it was not to be found, nor could we discover a nest, though in all probability there was one quite close to us. I also shot four Great Reed Warblers (*Acrocephalus turdoides*), but only succeeded in finding one. This bird is very dead-reed-like in colour everywhere; the only bright part about it is the palate, which is brilliant orange.

Two clutches of Black Terns' eggs were also

taken, one clutch containing a pale-blue egg. I have seen similar eggs in the nests of Common Tern, but I have never seen such a variation among all the hundreds of Black Terns' eggs I have met with in different countries. We shot a pair of Gadnall for the pot. These ducks are most excellent eating. We had been having short commons lately, and one reason for our coming out was to shoot something to eat. I hadn't tasted meat for days. Rettig told me that he was sometimes driven to eat Cuckoos and Hoopoes, which are considered here good food. I also knocked over a White-eyed Pochard and a Mallard, but the former was only winged, and dived and was no more seen. I ought to have fired again when it first fell, for unless they are killed outright they nearly always escape by diving.

When we had come to our last cartridge, loaded with special big shot for Eagles or Swans, a pair of Red-crested Pochards (*Fuligula rufina*) were approached, but though the large shot tore up the water all round them they both flew up untouched.

One reason, as I have said, for our day's outing was to shoot for the pot; the other reason was that this day was a special saints' day in this village, and all Tulcea would drive over, and the village would be *en fête*. Last year sixty people called to

see Rettig's collection of birds, and entertaining them hospitably cost him two sheep, and wine in proportion. This sort of thing does not suit him nor me; so we fled into the Balta, while his wife went off to the town to see some friends, leaving the house shut up and empty. When we returned after sunset we saw the last of the carriages and wagons starting back and congratulated ourselves on our escape.

We had also expected to collect some larvæ of the moth *Lælia cænosa*, of which I had seen such numbers in the previous year; and in this we were not disappointed. We found about a hundred of them on reeds, and brought them back bottled up in hollow reed-stems. They were still small, and are fond of hanging on the extreme tip of a pendant reed-leaf when at rest. Some were very pale, almost whitish in colour; others bright yellow. These are possibly male and female. Later, as they grew larger, they became more brilliant in colour, and were really very beautiful objects.

By this time my room had acquired the typical characteristics of the abode of a naturalist. Every available space was littered up with boxes of eggs, and eggs waiting to be blown, birds waiting to be skinned, and trays of skins drying on the bed. There was a live Purple Heron tethered to the leg of the table, a skin of a Black Vulture on

the floor, cameras, tripods, guns, rifle, bandoliers of cartridges, tins of arsenic, boxes of caterpillars, *et hoc genus omne*; while a Great Bustard and a Bittern looked down from the walls, and a wolf-skin served as a carpet in front of the bed.

On the 5th of June we started on an exploring expedition after *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, this time saying nothing about it to the authorities. Rettig was not in good odour with the officials, as there existed some jealousy between him and the naturalist at the museum, and the Government had treated him very badly over the exhibition, for which they had commissioned him to supply a collection of birds and beasts. Not only did he receive no payment, but he was unable to obtain the specimens at its close; and in one way or another there was a good deal of friction. I had found out, too, that since I had associated myself with him the fishery administration officials were not so cordial, and though they promised their assistance nothing seemed to be forthcoming from them. So we quietly went off one day provided with my written permission from last year which they had promised to renew but had not.

First of all we hired Andreas again, and his wagon, and drove through Mahmoudie, where I was last year, to a village named Merigol (both Turkish names). From this place we engaged a



NEST OF PIGMY CORMORANT (PHALACROCORAX PYGMEUS)

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couple of fishermen and two small *lodkas*. These were mere canoes; in each there was barely room for two persons, without any luggage. But cameras had to be taken, also sleeping-rugs, food, cooking pots, materials and tools for preserving skins, and guns. These required careful stowing to get in at all, and everything else was left behind. No brushes or combs, no knives and forks or plates, only a big spoon each, two mugs, ten huge loaves, an iron pot, and onions, olives, sugar, salt, and tea.

With these scanty stores we pushed off into the watery wilderness, known as the Balta, for a week, during which time we never entered a roof or a bed, but slept on the ground wherever we happened to be—or rather, where we could find any ground solid enough to sleep on, which was not always an easy matter—and depended upon our guns and the fish we could get from the nets we passed on our way.

All my other expeditions have been luxurious in comparison with this one, but I must say it was from start to finish most enjoyable. I became quite an adept at eating with my fingers, without plate, or knife, or fork, such difficult foods as boiled fish, and could enjoy my food under the very roughest conditions. Some days we shot ducks, or took Coots' eggs, and of fish we had the best—Carp, Danube Salmon, Fresh-water Herrings, and so on. It seems

to be the custom to help yourself from a set net, but only enough for the present needs. Naturally enough, however, when overhauling a drum-net for our dinner-pot we did not leave the best fish behind us. Our drink was Danube water scooped up in the boat's baler, or sucked up through a reed, and tea made by boiling a handful of tea in the same iron pot which had just cooked the fish. This was just rinsed out, leaving the tea rather fishy from the globules of fish-oil floating on the top. Our cooking was done with reeds. This is the only fuel used throughout the Dobrudscha. They give out a great heat, but burn quickly. One of the paddles being stuck into the ground at an angle, the big pot was suspended from the upper end, and a double handful of dry reeds lighted under it. This is pushed forwards as it burns away, and replaced with others when finished. Without reeds the people here could hardly exist, they are useful for such a variety of purposes. Like the fish, they are a Government monopoly, and every household pays a tax of about 11s. a year for the privilege of cutting or buying as many reeds as they like. Each house has its reed-stack outside in some convenient place, big enough to supply its needs for the winter.

The cold here during the winter months is excessive. The ice forms on the Danube to the



NEST OF NIGHT HERON (TOP)
NEST OF SQUACCO HERON (BELOW)

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depth of six feet, and the snow is also many feet deep.

The houses are all thatched with reeds, the fences and fish-traps being also always made of the same material. The cows and horses are fed on the green leaves, while the young and tender shoots are boiled for human food. They are even trying, so I heard, to make paper from reeds. If they can succeed in this—and it seems to me quite feasible—the manufacture should be a profitable one.

We had not gone very far on our first day's journey when Rettig, who was in advance with Ivan, fell in with a flock of Caspian Terns (*Sterna caspia*), and got four of them. Later in the afternoon we found a big colony of Squacco Herons (*Ardea ralloides*), Night Herons (*Nycticorax griseus*), and Pygmy Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), in a thicket of half-submerged shallows. The slender bushes were crowded with nests, and the stench was, as usual, terrific. As our boats were forced through the thickly-matted bushes the terrified birds flew around in the greatest confusion and alarm.

The water was very deep, in most places from six to eight feet, but in one spot at the outside of the colony I found it was just possible to stand with the camera. I had provided extra legs to screw on the tripod for the deep water generally

found in this district, furnished with a broad flange to prevent sinking in the soft mud ; and after I had donned a new pair of waders nearly up to my chin, I lowered myself from the stern of my canoe. Getting in and out of a boat in waders is a ticklish operation, and in these small canoes I had to be particularly careful, especially in getting back again, for the slightest disturbance of the equilibrium would have resulted in a capsizing.

Even with the extra length on the tripod it was only barely possible to work here, and to add to my difficulties there was a raging wind blowing. There generally is, I notice, when with great difficulty I have been able to reach a good position for a series of photographs of interesting or rare birds.

However, when I had sent the two boats away to a short distance I waited for some time, with but small hopes of success. After wheeling about in confusion the birds at last began to return to their nests, and I could see them settling in all directions except just in front of me ; and when they did approach it was impossible to obtain a clear view for the waving bushes and high reeds. The only chance I had was at a Squacco Heron which perched for some time on a tall sallow not far away, but even then the difficulty in getting the camera to bear on it in such deep water was considerable, and the result was not very encouraging.



SQUACCO HERON (ARDEA RALLOIDES)



HOBBY (FALCO SUB-BUTEO)

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Then I called up the boats, and we proceeded to take some eggs. The nests of Pygmy Cormorants all contained young birds except one, which held a clutch of much-addled eggs. They were white and chalky, and very elongated in shape. The young birds were the most hideous little wretches I have ever seen, quite naked, with curious pink pouches on each side of their beaks. The Squaccos' and Night Herons' eggs were much incubated, and a number of the nests contained young birds. I had in a short time a pile of eggs in the fore-peak of my boat, which took me days to blow, so that it was not very surprising that a good many were broken, especially as some of them held quite well-formed and feathered young.

Near this colony we saw six Pelicans flying overhead. These were probably *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, and were the only Pelicans seen on the trip. The two Russian fishermen we had engaged had held out very small hopes of our finding a colony of these birds on account of the great depth of water everywhere, which had submerged their usual haunts.

At the approach of evening we had to think of a suitable place for sleeping, and finally settled on a small island on which grew several willows. The canoes were drawn up on the bank, and a fire of wood lighted on which our pot was soon in full

swing. We had a fine carp for supper, and after tea and cigarettes made ourselves comfortable for the night. I had my india-rubber ground-sheet and a sleeping-bag, in which, with my heavy Burberry coat over all, I slept like a top. I could spare a rug for Rettig, who was not so well provided. In fact, with this outfit I was so warm and comfortable that I could half undress and sleep through heavy rain without shipping a drop inside. In the morning the shallow water which surrounded us was alive with Night Herons and Squacco Herons, Glossy Ibises and other long-legged water fowl. I could have spent the whole day here with great advantage, as there was decent cover for hiding up, and I should, no doubt, have been richly repaid in photographs, as it was evidently a favourite resort. I have regretted ever since that I didn't stop longer; but when one is on a quest for special objects it doesn't do to tarry anywhere or to be led aside for anything else, however tempting. Until the Pelicans were found I felt bound to keep moving on the search, and accordingly we proceeded on our way with reluctance. While the breakfast was cooking a string of seven Mute Swans flew over.

Heavy rain drove us to take refuge towards mid-day in an empty hut made of reeds. Nothing but such bad weather, for it was a regular downpour, would have induced me to enter this noisome abode;



SCENERY NEAR THE IRON GATES



SUNSET IN THE BALTA

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for it was full of mosquitoes, which clung to the rotting walls in thousands and buzzed hungrily round us as we entered. The ground was so sodden that when we sat the water oozed up and made a pool, and there was, to complete our discomfort, an overwhelming stench of damp and rotten reeds and general filth. However, here we were kept prisoners for a couple of hours; and after eating some cold food we had, we slept an uneasy siesta as well as we could for the mosquitoes. This was the only roof we had over us for the whole of this trip.

We reached this day the mouth of the St. George's arm into the Black Sea, and turned south to explore the maze of marshes which surround the small lake of Dranov, which I passed through last year. This district was where Ivan thought we might, if anywhere, find the nesting-place of *onocrotalus*, but we saw no signs of them. There was very little dry ground anywhere, and we searched for some time before we could find a sleeping-place. Passing the night in our small *lodkas* would have been extremely cramped and uncomfortable. It would have been quite impossible to lie down, and, besides, we couldn't cook anything. At last we discovered a small grass-grown islet, indistinguishable from the surrounding water. On all sides, as far as the horizon, nothing was to be seen but a flat green expanse of water-grass and rushes; we might have been on the boundless prairie,

but there was in reality hardly an inch of dry land for miles. In the far distance, about twenty miles away, twinkled a lighthouse in the Black Sea, the sole reminder of human presence. Bitterns boomed on all sides, and the chorus of frog music all night was unceasing.

How to procure fuel was the first difficulty; and while Rettig and I hunted about for a dry spot, Ivan and Zincon went off in the *lodkas* in search of dry reeds, in which they were fortunately successful, or we should have gone supperless to bed save for dry bread and olives. Our island was not over and above dry; water oozed up wherever we sat or lay down; and in the night I had a dim sort of idea that it was raining hard, but was too sleepy to trouble my head about it. But mingled with the deafening croaks of the frogs was the dreaded hum of countless mosquitoes, and I slept with my head in a green gauze mosquito-veil over my cap. However, this, though it kept out the mosquitoes, must have got disarranged towards morning, for on waking I found inside it, and sitting comfortably in the middle of my forehead, a big frog! Another croaker I found, on rising, squashed perfectly flat underneath me. This camp we called in consequence *Hôtel des Grenouilles*.

We frequently saw Sea Eagles sitting among the reeds on the banks or perching on the trees, mostly

willow, which grow along the Danube; but the commonest raptorial bird everywhere is undoubtedly the Marsh Harrier, which simply swarms. The Bittern also must be very abundant, judging from the booming, but we never saw one. In our devious wanderings in and out of these endless reeds and sedges it is a wonder we never came on a nest; but though I always kept a sharp look-out, we never found one. Grebes abounded, the Great Crested, Red-necked and Black-necked Grebes appearing more common than the Little Grebe. They are much sought after by the fishermen, who kill them wholesale in spite of the protection nominally accorded them, with very little risk of discovery in these solitudes, where it is possible to travel all day without seeing a human being. One day we passed a Grebe-hunter, who told our men that he had thirty odd Grebe skins on board. The skin of the breast is roughly stripped off and stretched on a reed framework. It is then rubbed with salt and dried in the sun. The restaurant keepers in the towns and fishing-villages are all Jews, who buy up all the Grebe skins and Herons' plumes they can get for the plume trade, and also skins of otter, fox, wolf, and martin. We shot the same day a pair of Red-necked Grebes, the male being spoilt for museum purposes, but I made a fine skin of the female.

Towards evening, as we approached a sparsely inhabited region, we made for a house we could see afar off in hopes of a night's lodging, but found it almost deserted, and half under water. One solitary being sat in a boat moored to the front of the house, but after an inspection we decided to move on to his nearest neighbour an hour away, leaving him sitting disconsolately half-way up a ladder leading to the roof, as though he contemplated roosting in the Stork's nest there placed. It was, no doubt, the only dry spot in the whole establishment.

We found the other house on the shores of the Black Sea, on a narrow strip of sand which divided the salt water from the fresh. Here we met large flocks of cattle and a lot of men, Bulgars, who were employed by the Government, destroying locusts. But Bulgars are notoriously the most inhospitable people in Europe; and though a heavy thunderstorm was brewing, they never asked us into the house, which was a fairly big one for these parts, and barely condescended to take any notice of us at all. All we could get was permission to sleep on the strip of sand between the cowshed and the water. If we hadn't had a fine carp with us we might have gone supperless to bed, but we had a good supper, and in return for their churlish behaviour we pulled down a part of their dilapidated cowshed with which to make our fire. As soon as it was dark,



SERVIAN VILLAGE ON DANUBE



BULGARIAN VILLAGE

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Rettig and I climbed up on the roof in order to loot the Storks' eggs, for there were several nests. Unfortunately, they all held young birds, which were no good to us. If they had only been eatable we would have taken them fast enough. There would, I expect, have been a fine shindy if we had been seen up there, as the Storks are much venerated here, and it is difficult to get eggs for that reason.

On the lake of Raselm, which we passed again, we found a large colony of Herring Gulls, which seemed to have yellower legs and feet than our *Larus argentatus*, a dirty, yellowish white, but not yellow enough for *Larus cachinnans*, the usual Mediterranean form. There were a lot of well-grown young birds, but I managed to find a few clutches of eggs, though no more than two in a clutch. Rettig near here shot a pair of Great White Herons (*Ardea alba*), the male of which had beautiful long plumes—over forty, I think, writing from memory. We had seen a few before, and near Galatz they seemed not so uncommon, but we did not turn up any nests in this country. The female, unfortunately, was spoilt by being too badly shot. We might have saved the skin, perhaps, if we had been quietly at home; but working as one goes, in a small boat, with no room to move and nowhere to put anything, is not conducive to good results in difficult cases. I must say, however, that the rest

of our skins turned out very well, and were in fine condition after a little work on them on our return, Rettig being a first-rate taxidermist.

The last day we shot three Mediterranean Black-headed Gulls—lovely birds they were, even more striking than our brown hooded *Larus ridibundus*, which is also common here. They had jet-black heads, with a scarlet eyelid, and a white patch above and below the eyes, with red beak and feet; we also got a Little Gull, unfortunately damaged too much to skin.

But this expedition, enjoyable enough though it was, was quite unsuccessful in its primary object, the finding of a nesting colony of *Pelecanus onocrotalus*. And considering that last year's search also failed, I came to the conclusion that they probably nested in some other part of the Dobrudscha higher up the river. In this I was right, for eventually, months after my return, Rettig, on a winter hunting expedition, fell in with an old nesting-ground of these birds, almost by accident, and succeeded in shooting two birds of the same year. He described the bushes for a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres as destroyed by the dung of the thousands of Pelicans and other birds which had nested there—

‘Tausende und Tausende von Pelicanen müssen hier gewesen sein; Cormorane und Phalacr. pygm.



SPALAX TYPHLUS

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sind hier in solchen unmassen, dass die Weidenbaume, ihre stand und Schlatplatze auf eine Entfernung von $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometer infolge der Ablagerung der excremente abgestorben sind.'

It fairly made my mouth water when I read this letter, to think that we had missed such a gathering of birds. Though they will probably nest in the same place this year, I shall not be there to see, and to photograph. But Rettig will, and I expect to have a glowing account of his doings there before long.

While at Malcoci I had an opportunity of photographing a dead specimen of that curious animal, *Spalax typhlus*, which was brought in to Rettig by a boy. This rodent has no visible eyes, at least I could find none on examining it (but I didn't dissect it), and is supposed to be blind. It never comes to the surface, but burrows among the roots of plants, especially potatoes, on which it feeds. The photographs show the extraordinary development of the gnawing teeth.

We had a day or two's rest after our exertions in the Balta, then I packed up my belongings and started homewards. The heavy luggage was sent round by sea, including a huge case of bird-skins. A box of eggs I took with me. Besides these, cases of eggs and skins had been previously forwarded from

Durazzo and Budapest. (For a list of species met with, and specimens of eggs and skins procured, see Appendix.)

The homeward journey was made by steamer up the Danube as far as Vienna, a voyage of about a week. I was anxious to see something more of this great river, and more especially to have an opportunity of seeing Servia and Bulgaria. Besides, I had a lively remembrance of the discomfort of the long railway journey I had last year from Galatz to London in July—four days and nights in a stuffy second-class carriage, so crowded that I was not able to stretch my legs the whole way, day or night. Compared with this uncomfortable state of things, travelling by steamer was luxurious, if slow.

I should have liked to land at some of the picturesque little riverside villages in Servia and Bulgaria, especially the former, but time did not permit, and all I could do was to attempt snapshots as the steamer slowed up when about to stop. Objects of interest were not wanting as we forged ahead against the strong current; sometimes a Sea Eagle could be seen watching for his prey on a dead stump, or a willow-tree overhanging the water; sometimes a group of Herons and Ibises were passed; historic castles and the scenes of ancient battles mingled with more peaceful sights such as the curious boat-mills floating in the quieter backwaters,



SCENERY NEAR THE IRON GATES

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or groups of peasants in quaint costumes going in procession to some religious shrine or festival. In the neighbourhood of the famous Iron Gates, the scenery is particularly fine and impressive, far finer than anything I have seen on the Rhine. Here the river abandons its usual majestic but somewhat monotonous course, and makes sudden turns and twists through narrow gorges. Rocks of brilliant colours, now bright red, now a creamy white, like marble, rise abruptly in perpendicular pinnacles and fantastic spires.

On the south side may be seen, hewn into the rock which overhangs the river, the old Roman road made by Trajan. These rocky cliffs and perpendicular heights should be interesting to geologists. The strata in some places appear to be twisted and contorted to an extraordinary degree. The rocks in consequence present such a curious appearance that I attempted to photograph them in passing; but it is almost impossible to photograph such detail from a moving steamer, and the results were quite worthless.

After passing Belgrade, which happened after dark, I interested myself in identifying the places visited by Prince Rudolf in his memorable expedition down the Danube. Since that date, 1878, many changes seem to have taken place, which is not surprising, for the farthest point reached by him

in his fifteen days' expedition is only twenty hours by steamer from Budapest.

Of the Frška-gora I can say nothing, for it is too remote from the river; but of the other places I fear that an ornithologist rash enough to visit them expecting to find Sea Eagles, Black Storks, and Ospreys would be doomed to disappointment. It is possible, of course, that a few birds may still exist in the more remote parts, and in the solitudes of the marshy woods and islands, but it would be quite hopeless to expect to find them in the abundance of thirty years ago. The Osprey, indeed, constantly mentioned by the Crown Prince as being found on the Danube everywhere in great abundance, is now very rare. Why, I do not know, but I failed to see this bird at all; and though I made inquiries about it wherever I went, nobody seemed to know anything of it. One would think that in the solitudes of the immense district of the Dobrudscha, where all the conditions seem favourable to its habits, it would find congenial hunting-grounds and nesting-places, but such is not the case. Even in the lagoons of Albania, where birds are absolutely unmolested by the inhabitants, I never saw one, and Herr Reiser informed me that it was extremely rare in Bosnia and the surrounding countries.

Though I kept a good look-out during this voyage up the river—it was, in fact, all I had to do to pass



LOADING MAIZE LIGHTERS AT RUSTCHUK



HUNGARIAN VILLAGE ON THE DANUBE

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the time—there were but few birds noticed above Belgrade, and those few only of common species, like Cormorants, Grey Herons, Ducks, or the smaller Hawks, such as Hobbies and Kestrels. I saw no Eagles or any of the larger birds of prey, which I had been accustomed to see almost daily on the lower parts of the Danube.

The journey home by train was spoiled by a stupid German porter, who put me into the Hook of Holland train instead of the Calais-Dover at Cologne—a most irritating mistake to happen at the very last day, after knocking about for six months through many wild countries without any mishap.

Thus ended an expedition full of interest, in spite of some occasional hardship and discomfort and constant and continual hard work. For bird and egg collecting, combined with photography, in wild countries, is no child's play, and requires absolute fitness in condition and general health, and plenty of enthusiasm for the work, without which it is impossible to stand the strain and bodily and mental fatigue.

APPENDIX

LIST OF SPECIES MET WITH, AND LOCALITIES

o Eggs taken.

† Skins procured.

- Mistle Thrush, *Turdus viscivorus*, *Linn.* Albania.
 Song Thrush, *Turdus musicus*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania.
 Blackbird, *Turdus merula*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Corfu.
 Blue Rock Thrush, *Monticola cyanus*. Spain.
 Redwing, *Turdus iliacus*, *Linn.* Albania.
- o† Wheatear, *Saxicola œnanthe*, *Linn.* Bosnia, Montenegro, Roumania.
- † Black Chat, *Saxicola leucura*. Spain, Montenegro.
 Whinchat, *Pratincola rubetra*, *Linn.* Spain, Montenegro.
- o Stonechat, *Pratincola rubicola*, *Linn.* Spain.
 Redbreast, *Erythacus rubecula*, *Linn.* Corfu, Albania.
- o Nightingale, *Daulias luscinea*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Montenegro.
- o Whitethroat, *Sylvia cinerea*, *Bech.* Roumania.
- o Lesser Whitethroat, *Sylvia curruca*, *Linn.* Roumania.
- o† Orphean Warbler, *Sylvia orphea*, *Tenminck.* Spain.
 Blackcap, *Sylvia atricapilla*, *Linn.* Spain.
- o Western Olivaceous Warbler, *Hypolais opaca*. Spain.
- † Barred Warbler, *Sylvia nisoria*, *Bechstein.* Roumania.
 Dartford Warbler, *Sylvia undata*, *Boddaert.* Spain.
- † Wood Wren, *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, *Bech.* Montenegro.
- o Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus streperus*, *Viellot.* Montenegro, Hungary.
- o† Great Reed Warbler, *Acrocephalus turdoides*, *Meyer.* Hungary, Roumania, Montenegro, Albania.
- o Sedge Warbler, *Acrocephalus phragmitis*, *Bech.* Hungary.
- o Moustached Sedge Warbler, *Lusciniola melanopogon*. Hungary.
- Savi's Warbler, *Locustella luscinioides*, *Savi.* Hungary, Roumania.

- Hedge Sparrow, *Accentor modularis*, *Linn.* Albania.
- o† Bearded Tit, *Panurus biarmicus*, *Linn.* Hungary, Roumania.
- nest. Penduline Tit, *Ægithalus pendulinus*. Albania, Roumania.
- Long-tailed Tit, *Acredula caudata*, *Linn.* Albania.
- o† Great Tit, *Parus major*, *Linn.* Albania, Corfu, Spain.
- Blue Tit, *Parus cœruleus*, *Linn.* Albania, Corfu, Roumania, Spain.
- † White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba*, *Linn.* Bosnia, Albania, Corfu, Dalmatia.
- † Blue-headed Wagtail, *Motacilla flava*, *Linn.* Roumania.
- † Black-headed Wagtail, *Motacilla atricapilla*. Albania.
- Wren, *Troglodytes parvulus*, *Koch.* Spain, Corfu, Albania.
- Richard's Pipit, *Anthus richardi*, *Vieillot.* Spain.
- o† Golden Oriole, *Oriolus galbula*, *Linn.* Spain, Montenegro, Hungary, Roumania.
- o† Southern Grey Shrike, *Lanius meridionalis*. Spain.
- o† Lesser Grey Shrike, *Lanius minor*, *Gmelin.* Hungary, Roumania.
- o† Red-backed Shrike, *Lanius collurio*, *Linn.* Roumania, Hungary.
- o† Woodchat Shrike, *Lanius pomeranus*, *Sparrman.* Spain.
- Spotted Flycatcher, *Muscicapa grisola*. *Linn.* Spain.
- † Pied Flycatcher, *Muscicapa atricapilla*, *Linn.* Spain, Montenegro.
- Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*, *Linn.* Spain, Montenegro, Roumania, Albania, Hungary.
- House Martin, *Chelidon urbica*, *Linn.* Spain, Montenegro, Roumania.
- Sand Martin, *Cotile riparia*, *Linn.* Spain, Bosnia.
- Crag Martin, *Cotile rupestris*. Spain.
- Swift, *Cypselus apus*, *Linn.* Spain.
- † Alpine Swift, *Cypselus melba*, *Linn.* Montenegro.
- Pallid Swift, *Cypselus pallidus*. Spain.
- Greenfinch, *Fringilla chloris*. Spain.
- Siskin *Chrysometris spinus*, *Linn.* Dalmatia, Montenegro.
- Serin, *Serinus hortulanus*, *Koch.* Spain.
- o Goldfinch, *Carduelis elegans*, *Stephens.* Dalmatia, Spain, Corfu, Montenegro.

- o† Tree Sparrow, *Passer montanus*, *Linn.* Bosnia, Albania, Roumania.
- Chaffinch, *Fringilla cœlebs*, *Linn.* Corfu, Spain.
- o Corn Bunting, *Emberiza miliaria*, *Linn.* Spain.
- † Black-headed Bunting, *Emberiza melanocephala*, *Scopoli.* Roumania.
- o Reed Bunting, *Emberiza schœniclus*, *Linn.* Roumania, Spain.
- o Ortolan, *Emberiza hortulana*, *Linn.* Roumania.
- Starling, *Sturnus vulgaris*, *Linn.* Roumania.
- † Rose-coloured Pastor, *Pastor roseus*, *Linn.* Roumania.
- Jay, *Garrulus glandarius*, *Linn.* Albania.
- o Magpie, *Pica rustica*, *Scopoli.* Spain, Hungary, Corfu, Montenegro, Albania, Roumania.
- † Jackdaw, *Corvus monedula*, *Linn.* Bosnia, Montenegro, Albania.
- o Raven, *Corvus corax*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Montenegro.
- o Hooded Crow, *Corvus cornix*, *Linn.* Albania, Bosnia, Roumania, Montenegro.
- Rook, *Corvus frugeligus*, *Linn.* Hungary, Albania.
- o† Crested Lark, *Alauda cristata*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Roumania.
- † Dresser's Short-toed Lark, *Calandrella boetica*, *Dresser.* Spain.
- o Calandra Lark, *Melanoconypha calandra*. Spain, Roumania.
- † Nightjar, *Caprimulgus europeus*, *Linn.* Roumania.
- Rufous-necked Nightjar, *Caprimulgus ruficollis*, *Tenn.* Spain.
- Wryneck, *Yunx torquilla*, *Linn.* Spain.
- Sharpe's Green Woodpecker, *Gecinus Sharpii*. Spain.
- Kingfisher, *Alcedo ispida*, *Linn.* Spain, Roumania.
- o† Roller, *Coracias garrula*, *Linn.* Albania, Roumania.
- o† Bee-Eater, *Merops apiaster*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Montenegro.
- o† Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Montenegro, Roumania.
- † Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Roumania, Albania.

- Great Spotted Cuckoo, *Coccyzus glandarius*. Spain.
 Barn Owl, *Stryx flammea*, *Linn.* Spain.
- † Tawny Owl, *Syrnium aluco*, *Linn.* Montenegro.
 Short-eared Owl, *Asio accipitrinus*, *Pallas.* Montenegro.
- † Little Owl, *Athene noctua*, *Scopoli.* Montenegro, Spain,
 Albania.
 Scops Owl, *Scops giu*, *Scopoli.* Spain, Montenegro,
 Albania.
- o† Black Vulture, *Vultur monachus*. Roumania.
- o† Griffon Vulture, *Gyps fulvus*, *Gmelin.* Spain, Albania,
 Roumania.
- o Egyptian Vulture, *Pernopterus neophron*, *Linn.* Spain,
 Albania, Roumania.
- o† Marsh Harrier, *Circus ceruginosus*, *Linn.* Spain, Rou-
 mania, Hungary, Montenegro, Albania.
- † Pallid Harrier, *Circus pallidus*. Roumania.
 Montagu's Harrier, *Circus cineraceus*, *Montagu.* Spain.
 Buzzard, *Buteo vulgaris*, *Leach.* Albania.
- † Steppe Buzzard, *Buteo desertorum*. Albania.
- o Spotted Eagle, *Aquila clanga*, *Pallas.* Roumania.
 Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaëtus*, *Linn.* Herzegovina,
 Albania.
- o† Sea Eagle, *Haliaëtus albicilla*, *Linn.* Albania, Montenegro,
 Roumania.
- o Bonelli's Eagle, *Aquila bonellii*. Spain.
- o† Imperial Eagle, *Aquila imperialis*. Roumania, Albania.
 Spanish Imperial Eagle, *Aquila adalberti*. Spain.
- o† Booted Eagle, *Aquila pennata*. Spain, Roumania.
- o† Short-toed Eagle, *Circaëtus gallicus*. Spain, Roumania.
 Goshawk, *Astur palumbarius*, *Linn.* Albania.
 Sparrow-hawk, *Accipiter nisus*, *Linn.* Albania.
- o† Kite, *Milvus regalis*, *Savigny.* Spain, Albania.
- o† Black Kite, *Milvus migrans*, *Bodd.* Spain, Roumania.
 Peregrine, *Falco peregrinus*, *Tunstall.* Spain, Albania.
 Saker falcon, *Falco sacer*. Roumania.
 Lanner, *Falco feldeggii*. Albania.
- † Hobby, *Falco subbuteo*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Roumania.
- o† Red-footed Falcon, *Falco vespertinus*, *Linn.* Hungary,
 Albania, Roumania.

- o Kestrel, *Falco tinunculus*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Roumania.
- † Lesser Kestrel, *Falco cenchris*, *Naumann.* Montenegro, Spain.
- o† Dalmatian Pelican, *Pelecanus crispus.* Montenegro, Albania.
Crested Pelican, *Pelecanus onocrotalus.* Roumania.
Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *Linn.* Austria.
- o† Pigmy Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax pygmeus.* Montenegro, Albania, Roumania.
- † Heron, *Ardea cinerea*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Hungary, Roumania, Albania.
- o† Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea*, *Linn.* Spain, Hungary, Montenegro, Albania, Roumania.
- o† Great White Heron, *Ardea alba*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Albania, Roumania.
- † Little Egret, *Ardea garzetta*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania, Montenegro.
Buff-backed Heron, *Audouin.* Spain.
- o† Squacco Heron, *Ardea ralloides*, *Scopoli.* Albania, Roumania.
- o† Night Heron, *Nycticorax griseus*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Albania, Roumania.
Bittern, *Botaurus stellaris*, *Linn.* Albania, Hungary, Roumania, Montenegro.
- o† Little Bittern, *Ardetta minuta*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Roumania, Hungary.
- o White Stork, *Ciconia alba*, *Bech.* Spain, Hungary, Montenegro, Albania, Roumania.
- † Glossy Ibis, *Plegadis falcinellus*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Albania, Roumania.
- † Spoonbill, *Platelea leucorodia*, *Linn.* Roumania, Albania.
Grey-lag Goose, *Anser cinereus*, *Meyer.* Roumania.
- o Mute Swan, *Cygnus olor*, *Gmelin.* Roumania.
Sheldrake, *Tadorna cornuta*, *Gmelin.* Albania.
- o Mallard, *Anas boschas*, *Linn.* Albania, Roumania.
- † Gadwall, *Anas strepera*, *Linn.* Albania, Roumania.
Shoveler, *Spatula clypeata*, *Linn.* Albania.
- † Pintail, *Dafila acuta*, *Linn.* Albania.
- † Teal, *Querquedula crecca*, *Linn.* Albania.

- † Wigeon, *Mareca penelope*, *Linn.* Albania.
- Pochard, *Fuligula ferina*, *Linn.* Hungary.
Red-crested Pochard, *Fuligula rufina*, *Pallas.* Roumania.
Marbled Duck, *Anas marmorata.* Albania.
- † White-eyed Pochard, *Fuligula nyroca*, *Güldenstädt.* Roumania, Montenegro, Hungary, Albania.
Goosander, *Mergus merganser*, *Linn.* Hungary.
Red-breasted Merganser, *Mergus serrator*, *Linn.* Hungary, Corfu.
- † Wood Pigeon, *Columba palumbus*, *Linn.* Spain.
- † Turtle Dove, *Turtur communis*, *Selby.* Spain, Albania.
Rock Dove, *Columba livia*, *Gmelin.* Spain, Montenegro.
- † Collared Turtle Dove, *Turtur risorius.* Albania.
Partridge, *Perdix cinerea*, *Linn.* Hungary.
Red-legged Partridge, *Caccabis rufa*, *Linn.* Spain.
- Quail, *Coturnix communis*, *Bonnaterre.* Spain, Roumania, Albania.
- † Spotted Crake, *Porzana maruetta*, *Leach.* Hungary.
- Little Crake, *Porzana parva*, *Scopoli.* Hungary.
- Water-rail, *Rallus aquaticus*, *Linn.* Hungary.
- Coot, *Fulica atra*, *Linn.* Montenegro, Roumania, Albania.
- Crane, *Grus communis*, *Bech.* Spain.
- Demoiselle Crane, *Grus virgo.* Roumania.
- Great Bustard, *Otis tarda*, *Linn.* Roumania.
Little Bustard, *Otis tetrax*, *Linn.* Spain.
- Stone Curlew, *Ædicnemus scolopax*, *Gmelin.* Spain, Montenegro.
- † Pratincole, *Glareola pratincola*, *Linn.* Spain, Montenegro, Albania, Hungary.
Kentish Plover, *Ægialitis cantiana*, *Latham.* Spain, Albania.
Ringed Plover, *Ægialitis hiaticula*, *Linn.* Spain, Albania.
- Lapwing, *Vanellus cristatus*, *Bech.* Spain, Albania, Hungary.
- † Oystercatcher, *Hæmatopus ostralegus*, *Linn.* Albania.
- † Avocet, *Avocetta recurvirostra*, *Linn.* Albania.
Stilt, *Himantopus candidus*, *Bonnaterre.* Spain.
- † Woodcock, *Scolopax rusticula*, *Linn.* Albania.
- † Snipe, *Gallinago cœlestis*, *Frenzel.* Albania.

- † Jack Snipe, *Gallinago gallinula*, *Linn.* Albania.
 Dunlin, *Tringa alpina*, *Linn.* Spain.
- † Little Stint, *Tringa minuta*, *Leisler.* Albania.
 Knot, *Tringa canutus*, *Linn.* Spain.
- † Ruff, *Machetes pugnax*, *Linn.* Albania.
- † Sandpiper, *Totanus hypoleucus*, *Linn.* Montenegro.
- † Wood Sandpiper, *Totanus glareola*, *Gmelin.* Albania.
 Green Sandpiper, *Totanus ochropus*, *Linn.* Montenegro.
- † Marsh Sandpiper, *Totanus stagnatilis.* Montenegro.
- † Redshank, *Totanus calidris*, *Linn.* Albania, Spain.
- † Greenshank, *Totanus canescens*, *Gmelin.* Albania.
 Godwit, ? sp. Montenegro.
 Curlew, *Numenius arquata*, *Linn.* Albania, Corfu.
- o† Black Tern, *Hydrochelidon nigra*, *Linn.* Hungary, Albania,
 Montenegro, Roumania.
- o White-winged Black Tern, *Hydrochelidon leucoptera*,
Schinz. Hungary.
 Whiskered Tern, *Hydrochelidon hybrida*, *Pallas.* Spain.
- † Caspian Tern, *Sterna caspia*, *Pallas.* Montenegro, Rou-
 mania.
- o† Common Tern, *Sterna fluviatilis*, *Naumann.* Roumania,
 Albania.
- † Little Tern, *Sterna minuta*, *Linn.* Albania.
- † Little Gull, *Larus minutus*, *Pallas.* Roumania.
- o Black-headed Gull, *Larus ridibundus*, *Linn.* Corfu, Hun-
 gary, Albania, Roumania.
- † Mediterranean Black-headed Gull, *Larus melanocephalus*,
Natterer. Roumania.
- o† Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus*, *Gmelin.* Roumania.
- o† Yellow-legged Herring Gull, *Larus cachinnans*, *Pallas.*
 Montenegro, Albania.
- o Great Crested Grebe, *Podiceps cristatus*, *Linn.* Albania,
 Hungary, Roumania.
- † Red-necked Grebe, *Podiceps rubricollis*, *Bodd.* Roumania.
- o Black-necked Grebe, *Podiceps nigricollis*, *Brehm.* Corfu,
 Hungary, Roumania.
- o Little Grebe, *Podiceps fluviatilis*, *Tunstall.* Hungary.

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